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ABSTRACT

This document describes the establishment of a Department of Nonformal Education in Botswana and is intended as a case study that can help ensure that nonformal education receives adequate funding in developing countries. The first chapter examines the theory of nonformal education and includes sections on three guiding precepts for this type of education, principles for an effective structure of nonformal education, decentralization, organization of nonformal education, staff, the political aspects of nonformal education, and the necessity for cooperation between formal and nonformal education organizations. The second chapter traces the development of the Botswana Department of Nonformal Education since 1966. The third chapter examines the successes and failures of the Botswanan experience and highlights the implications for other countries. Among the topics covered are the growth of the Botswanan nonformal education program, the literacy program, culture, the learning environment, the lone learner, the need for group work, higher courses in distance learning, and reasons that expectations for education in Africa are less optimistic in the late 1980s than they were 20 years earlier. Appendices contain a list of department expenditures for 1981-82, notes on those expenditures, training notes on a teaching method used in the department, and a list of literacy materials available in 1981. The document concludes with an epilogue offering recommendations and a 67-item bibliography. (CML)

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Let the People Learn:

the establishment of a Department of Non-Formal Education in Botswana and the launching of a National Literacy Programme

Edwin K. Townsend Coles

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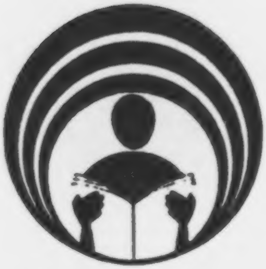

Logo of the Department of Non-Formal Education.

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Edwin K. Townsend Coles

Gaborone and Oxford

1987

PREFACE

Non-formal education in Third World countries received ample verbal approbation but inadequate resources to tranform the expectations generated into realities. For example, over three decades there has been much talk about the eradication of illiteracy, and yet the number of illiterate people in the world continues to rise. Agricultural extension education is universally espoused as being important, but the results have been disappointing and hunger continues to decimate large sections of the human family. The provision of primary health care is the stated aim of most governments; the essential educational drive to support this endeavour has been woefully inadequate and millions die through lack of the most elementary understanding of what is involved.

In the face of such disappointments, what can be done to ensure that non-formal education receives the support it must have? How can the genuine hopes and aspirations of peoples and governments be realised? This book is an attempt to face up to such questions. It divides into three parts. The first is a brief examination of the theory of non-formal education. The second part is a case study in which theory is translated into practice. The third part is a consideration of the case study in the light of the principles previously outlined. The successes and failures of the Botswana experience are examined and the implications for other countries are highlighted. Thus the three parts form a tryptych of theory, practice and evaluation.

The case study concentrates on one segment of non-formal education in Botswana, namely the contribution of the Ministry of Education. It has been deliberately presented in down-to-earth terms, describing in some detail the events which accompanied the establishment of a Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) and the launching of a national literacy programme. Too much of the literature on non-formal education is theoretical in its presentation; there are many case studies dealing with small scale projects but there is a dearth of narratives dealing with national approaches to non-formal education written from the viewpoint of the practitioner. This book is a contribution towards overcoming that lack.

A reviewer of a recent book of mine took me to task for suggesting that non-formal education is a more appropriate title in the Third World than adult education. Though it matters little to me what this branch of education is called, I am unrepentant that in the context of the developing world, non-formal education is to be preferred to adult education. Adults are elders and certainly over 21 years of age. In most Third World countries some 60% of the population is under that age. They could be thought to be excluded from activities provided solely for adults.

Finally, a personal comment. In the part of this book describing the work in Botswana, there has had to be recourse, from time to time, of the personal pronoun. This was inescapable. However, it has to be emphasised that the achievements of DNFE here recorded were the result of a goodly team of men and women who, caught with a vision of what non-formal education might do for Botswana, were prepared mightily to work for this end. This is true of people of all grades, from top to bottom; people in both major programmes, at headquarters and in the field. In all a stimulating and wonderful body of colleagues with whom it was a privilege to work. The absurdities of a small group of non-co-operators, who I inherited, were soon forgotten; my lasting memories of DNFE are of a team of positive and conscientious men and women.

I arrived in Botswana in October 1978. In September 1981 a Motswana was appointed to take over the Department under the localisation policy of government. I remained in the Ministry of Education as Adviser until 1986.

ABBREVIATIONS

BEC	Botswana Extension College.
CEO	Chief Education Officer.
DAEO	Dristrict Adult Education Officer.
DET	District Extension Team.
DNFE	Department of Non-Formal Education.
EE	Extension Educator.
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellshaft Fur Technische Zusammenarbeit.
IAE	Institute of Adult Education.
JC	Junior Certificate.
LA	Literacy Assistant.
LGL	Literacy Group Leader.
MOE	Ministry of Education.
NDP	National Development Plan.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
NFE	Non-Formal Education.
NLC	National Literacy Committee.
NLP	National Literacy Programme.
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination.
RECC	Rural Extension Co-ordinating Committee.
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund.
VET	Village Extension Team.

Chapter 1

LET THE PEOPLE LEARN[1]

Let the people learn must assuredly be the lodestar for those involved in non-formal education; the guiding precept from which the theory of this branch of education flows.

The imperative 'let' suggests that there has been some restriction on those to be reached. And this is precisely the position. Non-formal education (NFE)[2] in its most common forms in the Third World, is either offering initial learning experiences to those who have been deprived, or providing continuing succour of various kinds to those now outside the concern of formal education. In both cases there has been a tendency of governments to underplay their significance; to provide crumbs rather than a satisfying diet; to make some provision but seldom sufficient. Fortunately however opinion is changing; NFE is increasingly being recognised as an essential sector in a country's provision of education, though much needs to be done before its full acceptance as the equal of formal education is realised. Therefore the peremptory let, allow, permit is still necessary.

Efforts are being made throughout the Third World to democratise formal education. But the goal of universal primary education is still a long way off in most countries, and secondary and tertiary education remains unchanged as elitest operations, usually with a large price-tag attached to ensure that the very poor are excluded from participating. Indeed, there has been a distasteful tendency in some quarters to promote the notion that schools are for the rich and NFE is for the rest.

This unacceptable and unreal notion has arisen, in part, because NFE has evolved as the means of reaching out to the forgotten and neglected; the most difficult to motivate and often the most resistant to assistance[1]. Those who were and are deprived of formal education.

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[1] I am grateful to David K. Kirui, Lucas N. Mukulawendo, Poul-Erik Rasmussen and Gabriel M. Righa for valuable comments on an earlier draft of chapter I.

[2] Non-formal education in this book is taken to mean 'any organised learning activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting specific learning needs of particular sub-groups in the community – be they children, youth or adult'. (Mobilizing Human Resources: Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 1979, p.2).

This attitude has been further reinforced through cognizance of the stages through which this branch of education has passed to arrive at its present form. Fundamental education of the 50's is its direct grandparent, to be followed by community development. With both the emphasis was solely on providing a substitute for formal education in a manner which seemed relevant and at a modest price. In most countries the expansion to completion of the primary network was a far distant goal. Something had to be done now for those who had been neglected. For a time community development, through stimulating local endeavour to promote a better quality of life, was thought to be the answer. But neither of these earlier efforts were seen as continuing processes, not just 'making good' but rather offering something which was 'as good as'. Non-formal education (NFE), as it emerged to be called rather than adult education, was to be a complementary approach to formal education. This was new. That both formal and non-formal should be viewed as a partnership, and that, at its best there should be mobility between the two.

Of course NFE will continue to stress that its main clientele will be the destitute urban masses, the rural dwellers far from the centres of development, women and girls who continue to be seriously discriminated against, and nomadic people. All these have little political clout, which is why many governments continue to allocate insufficient funds for the work. Nevertheless there are discernable signs that attitudes are changing. It is now accepted that the development of a country depends on improving the quality of life for all and not just for a privileged segment; that there is no greater drag on the well being of a society than a large pool of people unable to participate in the changes and challenges of the modern world.

But it does so not as a cut-price, inferior branch of education but as an essential part of the total education apparatus of a nation. NFE has something for those who are deprived; it also has a message for the way in which formal education is managed and operated[2]; and it also opens up a vision of continuing assistance and support for all, at whatever level of attainment and at all ages throughout life. This is now being increasingly discerned, but is yet to be proved beyond doubt. For those in non-formal education, now is the testing time to prove that it can effect a transformation;

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[1] Philip Coombs has rightly pointed out that reaching the educationally underprivileged groups is the most difficult of all developmental tasks. (UNESCO, Prospects, Vol. XV No.1 of 1985, pp.33, 34).

[2] The relationship between formal and non-formal education is further elaborated in Townsend-Coles 'Maverick of the education family', Pergamon, Oxford, 1982, pp. 29-38.

that its approaches and methods really do enable people to make their fullest contribution to a nation's development.

NFE has always laid stress on learning. Whereas formal education relies heavily on teachers and teaching, and the process to be one between a giver and a recipient, NFE has advocated learning as a self-exploratory action. The learner is in the centre of the stage, seeking the resources which are discerned as being important. And whilst there is often an intermediary to assist, since the entire activity is being voluntarily undertaken, its raison d'etre must be that the learner has achieved satisfaction, otherwise it will cease to exist. This is in marked distinction to formal education where recipients are there under a compulsory mandate and the experience designed more for the ease of the teacher and the convenience of the administrator.

Three guiding precepts

Three guiding precepts give NFE its distinctive character. These are, first, that it is consumer centred, second, dealing with the here-and-now and third, of concern to all sectors of a nation or society.

As far as is practicable, programmes in NFE are undertaken only with the willing consent of the participants who are encouraged to take part in designing the experience and determining its modus operandi. This helps to ensure flexibility and an ability to develop micro activities, designed for use within a restricted target group or locality. This does not preclude the mounting of national and regional programmes, though even in these cases care must be taken to ensure that they are acceptable to those for whom they are intended. Indeed, in NFE there exists a constant tension between meeting national needs in the context of individual desires. Both are equally important. Unless NFE activities are clearly consonant with national policies and priorities, they will not receive the support and financial backing of governments. But it is also essential that the individual should feel that what is being done is directly relevant to his or her condition; that it is fulfilling a desire of meeting a need which is keenly felt. Programmes which are generated only with the power of the former are unlikely to be willingly espoused by those for whom they are intended. It has to be admitted that in many cases the needs of individuals are subsumed as being synonymous with the needs of communities, and whilst this may often be the case it can also result in individual aspirations being submerged.

A striking example where the provision of learning experiences for adults and youths receives both official and individual sanction is in literacy and numeracy training. Whilst no goverment would wish to be seen to be wholly antagonistic to the provision of such activities, there has been much argument by planners and economists as to the wisdom of deploying scarce resources into operations which may be thought to be not directly related to development. When so many school leavers are unemployed, why add to the pool of frustration large numbers of out-of-school people? Would it not be better to concentrate on employment generation rather than bothering with those men and women who are regarded as being on the fringe of modern society? It is, of course, perfectly true that basic literacy and numeracy are not necessarily a first requirement for human advancement. Ideas can be communicated orally; reading and writing can be dispensed with initially, though it is not long before they become indispensible if there is to be sustained improvement if the first step in learning is to be followed up by a second and subsequent ones up the ladder. Those who argue against providing adult literacy courses are turning a blind eye to that essential precept of NFE, namely that the wishes and aspirations of the learners must also be taken into account. If this is done, there will be a strong grassroots groundswell demanding that these skills be made available for those who have missed out on learning them earlier on; an omission almost invariably not of their making.

The second precept is that NFE is preparing people for the here and now, another distinction with formal education which is mainly concerned with providing people (pupils, students) with data and skills for possible use in the future. Primary formal education has seldom been viewed as a whole and satisfying experience; rather it has been designed as a preparation for secondary education. The inadvisability of this approach, which still persists, takes no account that the majority of children in primary schools receive no other formal schooling. The primary cycle is terminal. The result is that each year millions of children are set loose into the adult world wholly unprepared to do anything with confidence. And this absurd approach continues into junior secondary and senior secondary education. One of the criticisms often levelled against colonial education was that it took no account of the need to make each stage in formal education a satisfying whole. Sadly, after 20 or 30 years of independence, many Third World countries have done little to change things and each stage of the formal ladder continues to be mainly a preparation for the next level. Of course educationalists are not the sole culprits. Politicians and employers continue to make examination results the sacred cow of education, thereby distorting the whole process of schooling.

NFE cannot fall into the same trap. The participants would not put up with it. In contrast to the formal approach, NFE programmes are meeting specific needs and are of immediate application. Indeed, the most successful activities combine simultaneously practice with theory. The man, woman or youth being helped must feel that the sacrifice and effort has been worthwhile, that as a result of their endeavour life will be that much better now, not tomorrow!

The third precept that NFE is of concern to all sections of a nation and society, flows from the first two. Consumer needs will be very diverse; the here and now presents a multitude of problems to be faced in every aspect of life, whether it be in rural or urban situations, concerned with earning the daily bread, having a secure roof under which to reside at night, and adequate health to maintain the strength demanded to fulfil the chores and labour of life. Since NFE has to work in many diverse fields it follows that it is of direct concern to all sectors of a nation. More specifically, NFE is not the preserve of the Ministry of Education but of the whole panoply both of government and society. This presents problems. A most persistant reason why so much NFE is failing to make the impact it should, is that no satisfactory framework has been designed within which it can operate. Staff active in NFE come under the direction of many different employers. Those in government service receive their orders from Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Community Development, Education, Health, Social Work, Local Govcernment and no doubt others. But the list does not end there. There are those who look for sustenance to Universities, media units, trade unions, religious bodies, voluntary social organisations and commercial undertakings, a very disparate array. And since adult needs are seldom assuaged through the action of one agency, it follows that a cardinal requirement if NFE is to function effectively, is that there should be co-operation between the various providers. For the problems with which NFE deals are those of the real world; life is not viewed in water tight compartments but in whole experiences which encompass many different fields of learning. The child at school accepts that History, Geography, Science, Agriculture and Literature will be taught as though they have no relationship to each other. The adult cannot be fobbed off in this way. Life consists of a multitude of relationships, and learning experiences, to have meaning, must take account of this. The agricultural demonstrator must see that his work impinges on what the health visitor is doing; and both have much to offer to the literacy and numeracy worker. Indeed, extension education is lamentably failing in most countries because this most elementary consideration is almost wholly neglected. Ministerial government ensures that there shall be the minimum of integration. The reality is not just a neutral stance, but a positively determined attitude of hostility between the various extension agencies. Little wonder that so many literacy campaigns, agricultural extension schemes and basic health programmes are failing to make impact.

Thus a crucial question in NFE is how to ensure maximum effectiveness through the creation of a framework which encourages integrated action and at the same time allows the voice of the consumer to be heard.

An effective structure

There are certain principles to be considered if a structure for NFE is to be effective. These are first that the chain of communication should be established as a complete whole, that is it should be rooted in the community and pentrate the top echelons of government. It has not been uncommon for a country to set up a national body without any direct means whereby ideas and decisions can flow into and out of it. Such an arrangement is bound to be still-born, or more accurately it will be born alive and lead a lingering life of decline. A national body for NFE receives its inspiration from the people in whose service it has been established. Its legitimacy will stem more from democratically elected representatives than faceless and often irreimovable bureaucrats. It has to accept messages from below and adapt and adopt them to meet the priorities and policies of government. It must therefore be of a calibre which is respected by the highest authority and at the same time enjoy the confidence of the consumers.

Secondly, whatever device is established, every level of the chain must be representative of all the interests involved. In government this will include the line Ministries together with those concerned with national finance and planning. Indeed, there is much to be said for the latter to provide the leadership, since if this is given to any one line Ministry jealousies are bound to arise. NFE is not, however, the sole preserve of government, and ways and means have to be found of enabling the other interested parties to be an integral part of the chain. How this is done will vary from country to country, according to existing constitutional, political and social sensibilities. That the chain must be all embracing to be effective is beyond dispute.

Thirdly, as appropriate, the instrument at each level of the chain must have some executive power. If the various providers of NFE are truly to work in an integrated and coherent manner, it is not sufficient setting up a framework of representative committees. Each must be vested with some power, otherwise the whole edifice will collapse. At the national level, there must be sufficient authority to over-rule any line Ministry unwilling to use its resources in an integrated approach to NFE. At the lower administrative level there must be sufficient authority to ensure that field operations are being mounted as effectively as possible, and at the grass roots there must be the stength to ensure that consensus decisions are carried out. This is markedly different from what usually obtains where the line Ministries hold the whip hand, each one concerning itself solely about its own empire.

It has to be admitted that the second principle adumbrated above makes the third principle harder of application. Governments do not like heeding the advice of non-governmental agencies, most particularly when public funds are involved. However, a compromise can usually be found, if there is a real desire to do so. The principles of representality and executive power need not be self conflicting.

The fourth principle is that as far as possible the voice of the consumer must be heard. At the community level this may appear to be easily secured. It should not be overlooked however, that many small communities are rent asunder by petty conflicts and that individuals and small groups can be deliberately or inadvertently forgotten. At the higher administrative levels there will be complications. For just as governments are wary of having to take advice from non-governmental organisations they are equally loath to admit non-civil servants into the decision making processes. Furthermore, unless arrangements are made to consult with people over a broad front, representatives of consumer interests are likely to be as unrepresentative as are civil servants. This suggests that in addition to a chain of executive authority, there has to be a parallel system of consultative procedures, enabling a much wider public to participate in formulating policy and strategy for non-formal education. A system such as this has been established in Botswana, mentioned later in chapter II.

Decentralisation

The majority of Third World countries have highly centralised systems of administration. There are reasons for this. With some it is a legacy from the past which has persisted. Many countries embarked upon sovereign independence in a fragile state. It was inevitable that initially power should be retained at the centre. Populations were often small, infrastructure inadequate and leadership resources slender. All these factors tended to favour over centralisation of control, and this inevitably removes decision making away from the community level. Indeed the introduction of community dvelopment in the fifties and sixties was a backlash from the way in which grass roots aspirations were being neglected, resulting in the withholding of co-operation by communities in governmental sponsored development plans. There comes in time the necessity for the apparatus of government to be decentralised, though it has to be conceded that a reverse trend, the curbing of the power of local government, is not unknown. But decentralisation, where it is happening, has an important implication for NFE. Once power is shifted from the centre to a lower administration level, the door is open for NFE decision making to get closer to the people. And the lower down authority passes, the healthier will NFE become, for the people will be being drawn into the process both as designer and consumer.

There is thus a close link between the degree a system is decentralised and the participatory involvement of the learners. However this is neither straightforward nor easy. There may be the will to encourage the fullest participation by the learners, but there may also be restrictions as to the degree to which this is possible. There are circumstances when some decisions can be taken at one level while others require higher sanction. Furthermore, it is not unknown for a local committee to be as remote from sections of the community it serves as are some national policy-making bodies. Non-governmental organisations are often able to be in closer touch with grass-roots needs as are arms of local and central government.

Organisation of non-formal education

In general, non-governmental organisations have developed ways of handling their work in NFE. Universities have established adult education departments or institutes; commercial undertakings have education and training units under a senior officer; voluntary social organisations also have education departments, at any rate at the national level. Government ministries likewise are beginning to realise that an NFE department is a prerequisite for success, rather than a luxury. Agriculture has tended to be first in the field with a special extension unit. Increasingly Ministries of Health are accepting that a Health Education Unit is indispensible. Ministries of Education have tended to be the most laggard, possibly because they have comforted themselves providing meagre largesse to Universities and voluntary organisations. But change is taking place even there.

There are several choices before a line Ministry wishing to establish an NFE Unit. Clearly any arrangement has to fit in with prevailing administrative practices. In Federal States, for example, where the central Ministry is largely concerned with policy and the main executive responsibilities rest elsewhere, in a State or Province, central government departments will tend to be small, and the operational functions will be located in the lower administrative divisions. This is so in Nigeria and in some other large Third World countries. Under these conditions, the arrangements to be discussed will apply mainly to the lower administrative authorities and not to central government. But in the great majority of countries this is not the case. As has already been noted, the Third World is more characterised by over centralisation of power rather than devolution. The management of NFE is generally a central government task.

There are four principle ways in which a line Ministry can handle NFE. The first option would be for all the line Ministries to give up control in favour of some inter-ministerial device. Such a body would have to be presided over by a very senior person in the hierarchy, the Vice President or Deputy Prime Minister. This has the obvious attraction in bringing together all governmental providers of NFE under one controlling body, a dream which many have had. Unfortunately most governments are constructed on a Ministerial basis, each with its own portfolio responsibilities which are jealously guarded. It would be difficult to finance an inter-ministerial device (other than what was no more than a committee), and a unit of this kind could find itself belonging to everyone but lacking the support of the component parts of government. Two Ministries usually have a long tradition of extension work, namely Agriculture and Health, and it is most unlikely they would view hospitably the idea of losing control of their activities nor would this necessarily be in the best interests of the people being served. In general, this option is usually disregarded. It could function only where either central government has extensive powers, as in Socialist regimes, or where a system of government is being set up de novo.

A second option is to regard NFE as an extra-governmental activity. Advocates of this approach argue that NFE does not fit into the normally accepted pattern of ministerial government and is best handled by an organisation which is not tied to the civil service bureaucracy. This contention is further reinforced by the need for NFE to preserve its innovative and flexible approach, characteristics seldom found in a civil service. If a parastatal or possibly a wholly non-governmental organisation were set up for NFE it should enjoy freedom to operate, in much the same way that a University Department of Adult Education does. Consequently, as a parastatal it would be voted funds and then be left to get on with the work. So far so good! But it could face difficulties. It could fail to win that active support and co-operation of the line Ministries with which it would have to work and the result could be that its operations were severely constrained. It is not difficult to visualise situations where extension staffs could refuse to work with those of the parastatal. And if it deals only for example, with those aspects of NFE which might naturally come within the rubric of a Ministry of Education, it could still experience difficulties when it came to using Ministry staff and infrastructure. There are many in government service who find it difficult to accept that formal and non-formal are both parts of the education family, and no doubt some senior educational administrators, with little sympathy for NFE, would relish the chance of starving it of resources.

A third option which some theoreticians have advocated is to split the NFE staff into the various existing divisions of a Ministry. Thus a Ministry of Agriculture would not have an extension unit, but there would be extension staff in the Animal husbandry, veterinary, horticulture, etc. sections. Those who argue for such an arrangement contend that this will ensure an NFE input into every aspect of the work of the Ministry. Its influence would be ubiquitous. It is an ingenious idea and in theory has the attraction of depicting NFE infiltrating an entire Ministry. In practice what is more likely to happen is that the strength of NFE would be so dissipated that its impact is neutralised.

The fourth option, and the one most commonly adopted, is for a line Ministry to set up a department for its NFE services. Such a department must be accorded equal status with other units in the Ministry. It will thus participate in overall policy formulation. By being a cohesive organisation, its strength will be concentrated and will be able to contend with the demands being made by colleagues representing other interests. It will personify the concept that extension work is many faceted, of concern to all other interests of a line Ministry. NFE will be at the heart of things, no longer a peripheral activity of marginal value. It follows that where this option is adopted the need for a strong representative national body for NFE as a whole, as already discussed, is an absolute essential. Ministerial units for NFE which are not bound together but allowed to pursue their own interests unrestrained mean that the consumer is going to lose out; integrated extension work ceases to be a possibility.

Special responsibilities of Ministries of Education

Though there are examples where NFE has been deliberately excluded from

Education and given to line Ministries such as Community Development and Social Work, it is most generally accepted that a Ministry of Education has peculiar and special responsibilities; that there are aspects of NFE which are felt to be of a kind which only that Ministry can handle. These would be initial literacy and numeracy programmes, going on through various stages of continuing learning experiences. Much would come under such labels as remedial, in a non-technical sense, second chance, and the now emerging concept of a basic education package for those previously denied access to learning. To this list could be added elementary skill training in areas not covered by other line Ministries and civic or social education.

There are cogent reasons why a Ministry of Education must be brought fully into the NFE picture. NFE is the complement of formal education. These are not divorced operations but two sectors of one comprehensive system. There should be the maximum inter-play between the two, with bridges enabling particularly youths and children to be able to move from one sector to the other. Furthermore, it is the Ministry of Education which has the largest contingent of trained pedagogues and the greatest proliferation of educational plant in a country; it is essential that these resources should be made available to NFE wherever this is practicable.

Staff

It is a truism that the success of any venture depends on the people who are responsible for it. This precept is readily ascribed to medical staff, who are generally expected to show wholehearted dedication to their work

Its attribution to education is equally apposite. No branch of education can be effective unless those undertaking the work are wholly committeed to it; that they are willing to make the learner the subject of their exertions and themselves the keen and selfless activists. It has to be admitted that this is often not the case. Whereas the surgeon and nurse give all their talents to their patients, too many in the education service are content to offer short measure. The learner, whether child, youth or adult, suffers in consequence. The civil service mentality of doing just enough and no more is very insidious.

The need for commitment is common to the whole of education. However, in formal education there is a built-in goad with which to smite those who are prone to laziness. If a teacher fails to take a class or if a school consistently gets poor results in public examinations, parents will soon voice their disapproval. If educational administrators fail to supply teachers, books and equipment as and when required, awkward questions will be raised in parliament. The discipline of the formal system acts as a lash on the backs of those working in it. Back-sliding is readily detected and sometimes remedied.

The situation in NFE is somewhat different. Lacking in infrastructure, it is much more dependent on the genuine commitment of the individual. Indeed so much of NFE is undertaken by lone officials, working without fixed timetables and rigid curricula. It is creative and demanding work, calling for an exceptionally high sense of dedication. Staff with the right look in their eyes can achieve so much with comparatively slender resources. Consumer centred personnel will soon discover that under such leadership the participants themselves become willing partners, smoothing out all kinds of obstacles. Sadly NFE suffers from having too many people who have not got this devotion to their work. Undoubtedly a main cause of failure of so many programmes of NFE is simply that the practitioners were not equal to the task. Instead of being willing to go the extra mile they preferred to do the minimum; selfishness rather than selflessness is their life style. And whereas in formal education there will be some clamour if minimum standards are not met, in NFE very often the clients are so grateful for crumbs that they will not demand the whole loaf; that sub-standard work can continue for some time without being detected. Fortunately, adult participants do have one weapon in their armoury. That is their feet. If driven to despair at the lack of usefulness of a programme they will simply refrain from coming. Unfortuantely this often results in an activity being closed down rather than holding a critical examination why it has been a failure.

Lack of professional training is often cited as a reason for the poor performance of many in NFE. This may well be a contributory cause. In most countries there is a great need of overhaul in the way in which NFE staff are prepared. It is particularly essential that there should be integrated training for all grass-roots NFE staff in the line ministries. This has often been said and so seldom put into practice. But technical competence is only one attribute needed.

It is essential that those engaged in work of this kind should be endowed with the right attitude. There is a danger that much training, and especially that purveyed by universities, stresses the academic and theoretical at the expense of what could be termed the social and practical. Both are needed in NFE.

For the key task of any worker in NFE, from whatever Ministry or organisation, is to be able to get alongside those needing help and give them the encouragement and confidence to tackle new problems and face fresh challenges. This demands much more than technical competence.

It has been noted already that NFE stresses learning rather than teaching. It takes real understanding of the learner as an individual to serve as a facilitator rather than a filler of heads. The NFE educator can operate effectively only where there is cognasence of the social order and of the context in which the learner lives and which is the source of his or her aspirations and motivations. Learning is an individual process; teaching implies a collective operation. To help the learner requires an awareness of sociology and psychology, but digested in the currents of daily living. With many it is essential to take proper note of religious inclinations. It requires too an understanding of the political structure of society and the nation.

The political dimension

Finally, in this overview of NFE whereby the cry 'let the people learn' can become a dynamic force for betterment in a society, the political dimension must be considered. There is no doubt that NFE is by nature a political animal, and every apsect of it has political ramifications. As to how far politics obtrudes into NFE, and how the political dimension must be handled, will depend on the overall political context. In some circumstances it is central, and all that is embraced witin NFE is seen as promoting and underpinning the national ideology. In some countries, therefore, political education is a compulsory and dominant feature of programmes. This is especially the case in socialist administrations. But even in those societies which are less obviously politically oriented, there is not a branch of NFE which is not impregnated to some extent by it. For people who have been encouraged to think may not necessarily think in precisely the manner in which their mentors had hoped they would. Adult education was feared by colonial masters because of the chance it might make people dissatisfied with their station; communist regimes provide a blinkered form of education since dissent is not to be tolerated; independent governments today, and most notably though not exclusively those which loudly proclaim their adherance to democratic socialism, appear equally afraid of what a heavy dose of NFE might do. Conscientisation, to use an appallingly inelegant word, inevitably leads to some discomfort, at any rate for those who reside in the corridors of power and want the status quo to continue.

Herein lies the germ of a problem. NFE programmes usually involve change, often causing there to be some political revision in the balance of power. The effect of a literacy programme, or a land reclamation scheme or the introduction of small scale production units invariably means that things will never be the same again. People who could be manipulated are now in a stronger position to demand their rights; landless peasants now have a stake in the soil; the infusion of capital gives those involved a firm financial base. These changes may not be wholly welcome, and there will be an element wishing to frustrate their emergence. And yet it is doubtful if anything other than small-scale efforts can flourish without some political support. Indeed in the case of literacy programmes, the highest political commendation is regarded as being indispensible for their success. In most cases the result of this tension is for a compromise to emerge. The consumers wishes are met but within the laid down developmental priorities of government. For since political backing is essential in Third World countries, it is flying in the face of reality to conceive of significant programmes taking place effectively which run counter to national policies. To give any credance to activities stemming from a political opposition is a degree of sophistication seldom to be found.

Formal and Non-formal

Such is the broad canvas in which NFE operates. It is clearly distinguishable from formal education but at the same time is its essential complement. The two aspects or sectors of education must work co-operatively together if both are to achieve their maximum effectiveness.

This need for detente between formal and non-formal education is most clearly seen in the operation of Ministries of Education, though there should be strong links between what is done in agriculture and health extension and what happens in the formal classroom. Nevertheless, Ministries of Education tend to be in a central position in working out a satisfactory relationship between NFE and formal education.

The case study which follows illustrates how a Ministry of Education met the challenge of creating a modus operandi between these two branches of education, and how flesh and blood was given to the otherwise often lifeless image which many outside NFE have of it. The country is Botswana; the time is the immediate past.

Chapter 2

THE BOTSWANA EXPERIENCE[1]

1. *The establishment of a Department of Non-Formal Education.*

First beginnings

Non-formal education has been practised in Botswana for centuries. The initiation of young men and women into society by imparting to them the skills regarded as being essential for responsible adulthood formed an integral part of Setswana culture and custom. Indeed it was largely due to the introduction of formal schooling during the middle of the nineteenth century that spelled the gradual decline of this form of education, only recently being re-introduced by some communities.

Non-formal education as it is commonly understood today has also been a feature of Botswana life, at any rate for decades, and well precedes the events to be detailed in this narrative. Agricultural extension was established in 1914 with instruction for farmers, and there were also early instances of Churches and other voluntary organisations introducing literacy and basic education classes for adults.

In the years immediately around the assumption of sovereign independence in 1966, and in the decade which followed, two profoundly important developments took place in non-formal education. The first was the establishment by Patrick Van Rensburg of what became known as the Botswana Brigades. These units were community-based efforts to provide young primary school leavers with practical skill training. Brigades could be formed in any activity for which there was a need. Carpentry, building, weaving, farming and motor mechanics were amongst those which featured in the early years of the movement. Brigades consisted of small groups of trainees under the guidance of a supervisor. A unit would stay together for three years, with trainees learning on-the-job, the results of their labours providing the funds to maintain both themselves with pocket money and their supervisors with a salary. This approach to non-formal skill training

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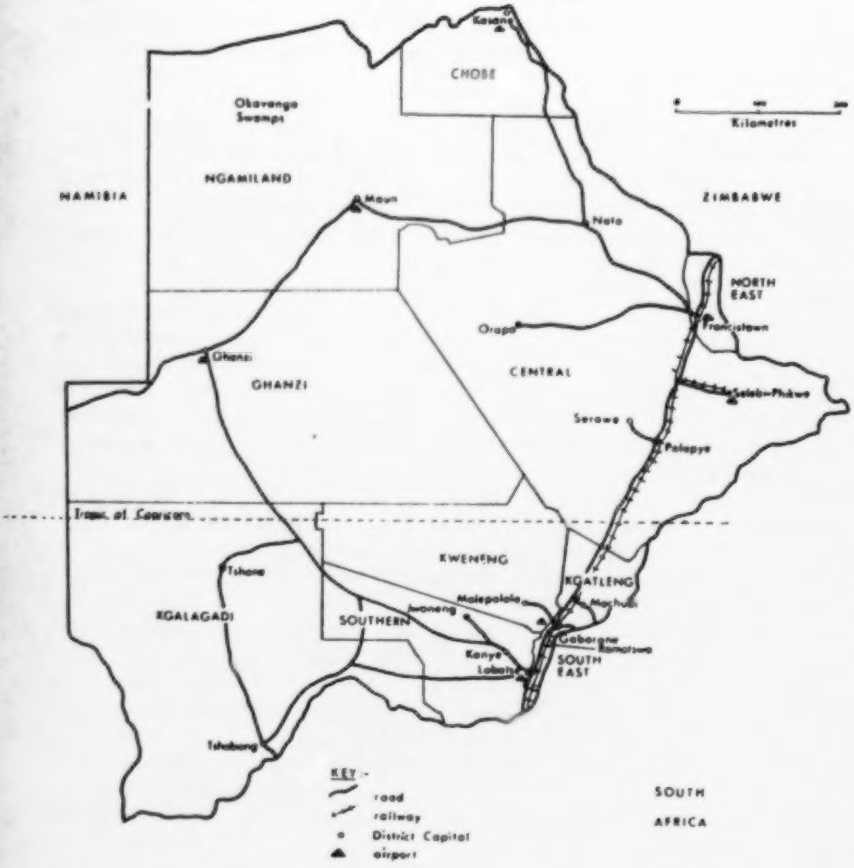
[1] See Map 1.


CHOBE
Kasane
Okavango Swamps
Kilometres
NGAMILAND
NAMIBIA
Maun
ZIMBABWE
Nata
NORTH EAST
Orapa
Francistown
Ghanzi
GHANZI
CENTRAL
Selebi-Phikwe
Serowe
Palapye
Tropic of Capricorn
KWENENG
Tshane
KGATLENG
Molepolole
Mochudi
KGALAGADI
Jwaneng
SOUTHERN
Gaborone
Ramotswa
Kanye
Lobatse
SOUTH EAST
Tshabong
KEY:-
road
railway
District Capital
airport
SOUTH AFRICA

MAP 1

BOTSWANA – Districts, towns and communications (Taken from Townsend Coles E.K. 'Maverick of the Education Family', Pergamon, Oxford, 1982)

continues in modified form in Botswana today. Started initially as a non-governmantal activity, it is now a shared responsibility between the Ministry of Education, together with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, on the one hand, and the autonomous Trusts running the Brigades. Had there been at that time a section in the Ministry of Education for non-formal education, it is reasonable to conjecture that the Brigades would have constituted an important element in its responsibilities.

The second development to which mention must be made was the establishment of a national, district and local framework within which non-formal education in general could operate. The need for an inter-ministerial structure for non-formal education has been discussed in chapter one. The particular system adopted in Botswana has certain novel features which deserve description, as well as some short-comings. It was during the 1970s that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning became aware of the need to co-ordinate the various arms of government concerned with extension education. If the work of each Department was to be made more effective it was essential that there should be some cohesion between the parties involved. Stated in its most elementary form, each extension agency must be supportive of the others rather than, as was often the case, in opposition. Exclusive one ministry approaches must give way to co-operative integrated programmes.

Few would doubt the good sense in such a proposition. How to put it into practice is a much harder exercise. The Botswana solution was to set up simultaneously three levels of formal committees, aided by two consultative devices which made it possible for a wider public to be brought into the decision making process. The formal framework consisted of a national Rural Extension Co-ordination Committee (RECC), with District Extension Teams (DET) at the district level and Village Extension Teams (VET) in the smaller communities. The title of the national body indicates where the emphasis initially was intended to be. The committee was to help bring together the various arms of government concerned with rural extension education. The principal participants were the Ministry of Local Government and Lands, concerned with local, District, authorities and also for community development and youth work; Agriculture concerned with agricultural extension and Health which was developing a national network of village clinics. As significant as the list of central participants of the RECC are those which initially tended to be of less importance, though this in some respects has since changed. These are the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, active in the promotion of rural industries, the Ministry of Home Affairs under which libraries are controlled and the Ministry of Education. It is with the last named that this narrative is principally concerned. The University adult education department is also represented on the RECC.

The major weaknesses of this central body are threefold. First is the total exclusion of non-governmental organisations, many of whom are providing specialist non-formal activities. By keeping them out of the national policy making body, not only is the credibility of the committee weakened, but the potential contribution of the NGOs severely limited. For instead of being able to work together with government they are excluded, each organisation developing its own programmes without recourse to the others. Other weaknesses of the RECC lie in its title. First, the word development might have been more appropriate than extension. The aim of the RECC is to assist development. Secondly, while it is important to be concentrating on rural development, this must not be to the total exclusion of the needs of the urban dwellers. In the case of Botswana, well over 18% (1981 census) of the population live in what elsewhere would be termed towns [1]. Emphasis on 'rural' implies that the committee is not concerned with them. Thirdly, there is no single connecting thread between the central body and the DETs. It is left to each agency to brief its own District staff. The result is that whilst the RECC may determine useful guidelines, even draw up statements of policy, the process of implementation is a piecemeal effort which inevitably reduces the impact of the DETs.

The second level of the framework are the DETs. On these are representatives of all the governmental extension agencies active in the District, together with the District (local) Authority. And below them are the VETs, through which the local Chief or Headman, the Primary School Head Teacher and representatives of extension interests are formally brought together to keep under review the developmental needs of each community.

As is always the case, given good will and good people, any structure can function adequately. All too often, however, this is not the case. Co-operation involves some loss of authority, and Ministries view such possibilities with suspicion. To some extent the two consultative devices which have been established in Botswana can help to overcome resistance to working together. At the national level, there is the annual National District Development Conference, at which District representatives, in large numbers, come together with national officials to review all aspects of policy and strategy connected with development, of which non-formal education is a vital component. Preceding this conference, each District conducts a District Conference at which participants from the District authority meet a wide cross-section of people from the smaller communities.

Both the formal structural framework and the complementary consultative procedures are necessary for the effective management of non-formal education. As was suggested in chapter one, decision making in non-formal education as far as possible must be based on concensus, involving as many potential consumers or beneficiaries as possible. That these arrangements do not always lead to effective co-operation on the ground is due to human inadequacies rather than deficiencies in the system[1].

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[1] In Botswana, there are only five designated towns. Other sizeable urban settlements such as Serowe (pop. 40,000) and Molepolole (pop. 19,000) are still technically villages.

It is in the context of this arrangement that the contribution of the Ministry of Education to NFE has been developed. The search for a suitable means in that Ministry began in 1970 with the publication of the Third National Development Plan. Up till then the Ministry of Education had relied mainly on encouraging others to do the work; most notably voluntary organisations and the infant University through its Division of Extra-Mural Services. The notion that the Ministry itself had direct responsibilities for the provision of programmes had not yet gelled.

The 1970 National Development Plan, however, had to draw attention to what was regarded as an undesirable situation which was emerging in formal education. Expansion of provision at the primary level had inevitably resulted in a flood of claimants for the much fewer places in secondary education. It was quite impossible for Government to meet these demands and there had therefore been a steady growth of unofficial private institutions catering for the rejects from Government Schools. Some of thse institutions were offering a reasonably good standard of education, but it is clear from the Report that many were not; the parents were being charged fees and their children were getting little in return. And as the number of Secondary School rejects grew so the demand for private places also increased. Clearly something had to be done.

The solution proposed in the Plan was for an Adult Education Officer to be appointed in the Ministry, and for a Correspondence School to be established for the out-of-school rejects. No terms were laid down for the Officer, who in fact was never appointed. In 1973, the Botswana Extension College (BEC) was established by government to provide the supplementary secondary education which could not be supplied through conventional channels. This it was hoped would reduce the demand for places in private secondary institutions.

From its inception, however, the BEC was to be concerned with the whole field of non-formal education, and indeed to be the means whereby the Ministry of Education carried out its responsibilities in community education as a whole. The initial professional staffing of the institution was entrusted to the International Extension College, based in Cambridge, and inevitably this meant that the emphasis of the BEC was mainly towards distance teaching, a particular aspect of out-of-school education.

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[1] See Thebanala, T. 'Co-ordination and Implementation of Non-Formal Education Programmes in Botswana', unpublished thesis, University of Manchester, 1982.

The National Education Commission Report of 1977 urged the Ministry of Education to look more seriously at non-formal education. Though the Report was somewhat vague in its advice to Government, it did return to the suggestion first made in 1970 that there should be an officer in the Ministry to be responsible for non-formal education. This led to further consideration on the role which the Ministry should play in what was increasingly being felt to be an important aspect of education. These deliberations were brought to a head in 1978 when there was an evaluation of the BEC[1]. The principal external donor of the institution, the Ford Foundation, would be withdrawing from the scene in the middle of the year, and both the Foundation and the Government agreed that the time was appropriate for a stock-taking to be held. Though the BEC had done much useful work, many felt that there had to be a thorough re-appraisal of the position. The evaluation report had proposed that a Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), incorporating the BEC, should be established. This recommendation was accepted by the Ministry of Education. I arrived in Botswana in October 1978 with the task to establishing DNFE and promoting its initial programme.

The Ministry of Education accorded equal status to DNFE with the other Departments of the Ministry (Diagram 1). This enabled its influence to be felt whenever matters of policy were being considered. Non-formal and Formal could work and plan together; there would be two complementary sectors of education and not two divorced systems. Whereas the former BEC had suffered by not having a senior spokesman for it located in the Ministry, the new Department would be actively involved in policy decisions and internal allocations which have to be made. There is no doubt that the establishment of the Department ushered in a time of unparalleled expansion in non-formal education. Whereas the BEC had been constantly dogged by lack of staff and funds, the new Department grew from an initial establishment in 1979 of about 40 – mostly those who had been working in the BEC – to over 200 in 1981.

For those countries which are considering what to do with non-formal education the experience of Botswana is quite clear. It must become an integral and equal partner of the parent Ministry. Only in this way will it be taken full note of, and consequently only in this way will it receive the support it deserves. Furthermore there is no doubt that the healthy inter-action which has taken place within the Ministry has been to the benefit of all. In particular a close relationship was developed between non-formal and primary education which greatly strengthened the work of both. It was at this time that the idea of establishing Education Centres in the Districts was taking root. Initially these Centres were to be designated Teachers Centres; the change in

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[1] See Townsend Coles, E.K. 'Evaluation of the Botswana Extension College', Gaborone, Ministry of Education/Ford Foundation: 1978.

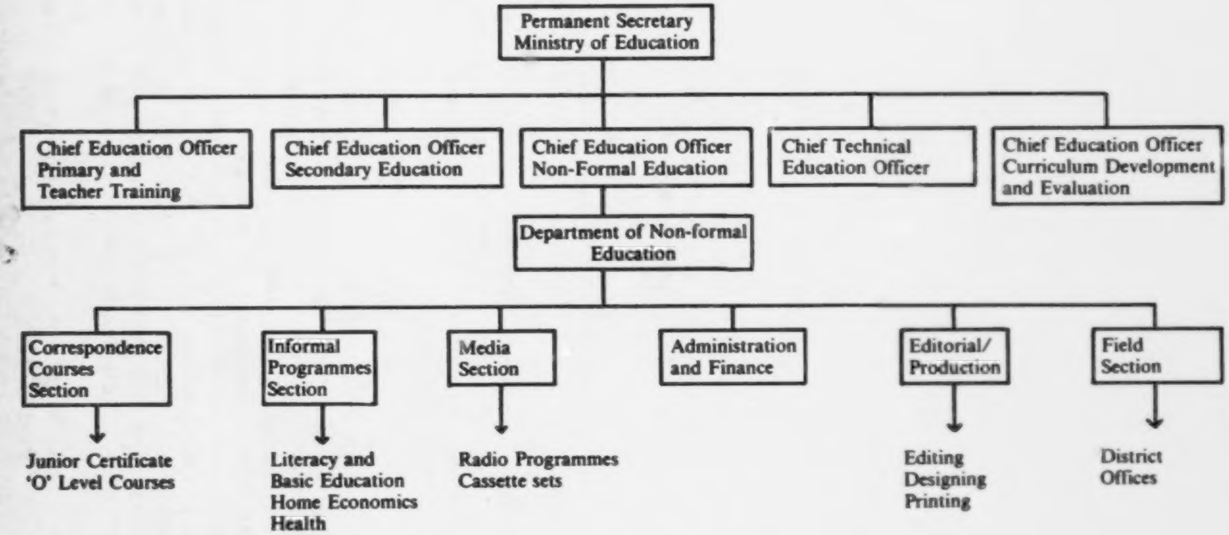
Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education
Chief Education Officer Primary and Teacher Training
Chief Education Officer Secondary Education
Chief Education Officer Non-Formal Education
Chief Technical Education Officer
Chief Education Officer Curriculum Development and Evaluation
Department of Non-formal Education
Correspondence Courses Section
Informal Programmes Section
Media Section
Administration and Finance
Editorial/ Production
Field Section
Junior Certificate 'O' Level Courses
Literacy and Basic Education Home Economics Health
Radio Programmes Cassette sets
Editing Designing Printing
District Offices

Diagram 1. To illustrate the pedagogical divisions of the Ministry of Education and the sections in the Department of Non-Formal Education. (Taken from Townsend Coles E.K. 'Maverick of the Education Family', Pergamon, Oxford, 1982) title heralded in a significant change in thinking. It was envisaged that these Centres would serve the local needs of all Departments of the Ministry. Initially they were to be shared facilities between the primary and Non-Formal Departments. Primary teachers using the Centres could learn about education in the wider community; non-formal staff have more direct access to the resources which are available through the primary school network. Since the Centre concept has now been broadened to embrace all aspects of the Ministry, non-formal education is thus brought into closer contact with secondary and technical education.

Having decided that the arrangement should be a Department in the Ministry of Education its actual shape had to be determined. What should be its structure and initial programme?

National Development Plan

In the period over the end of 1978 and the beginning of 1979, the chapter on education in the Fifth National Development Plan was being written, and it was during this exercise that the value of having formal and non-formal together could be exploited to the full. Though NFE was a stranger to some of the senior officers in the Ministry, it was conceded that it should be given its rightful place in the family.

The education chapter[1] of the Plan sets the following objectives; "to increase educational opportunities and to reduce inequalties of educational opportunities, so far as resources permit; to contribute to the balanced economic development of Botswana, by seeking to satisfy manpower requirements for all sectors, emphasising particularly the needs of rural development and employment generation; to promote personal qualities such as respect for national ideals, self-reliance and concern for other people, and to encourage full development of individual talents; to extend the role of schools and colleges in the local community and vice versa." In meeting these heavy demands, the national plan looks to NFE to make its contribution. It comments "to increase and equalise education opportunities, formal education provision will be complemented by development in non-formal education which will not only offer 'second chance' education of a traditional nature, but will also develop innovative programmes of individual and community development."

The scene was thus set for non-formal education to make its dèbut and to indicate its contribution to national betterment. However, since the Department was still in its infancy, it was important that it should not be overtaxed before there had been time to make a fuller appreciation of the situation. The section in the Plan on non-formal education was therefore written less specifically than would otherwise have been the case. It points to the role which non-formal education will play and mentions the launching of a national literacy programme and for an examination of the school type correspondence courses to see if something more appropriate for adults could be substituted. It refers to the need for more staff, particularly at the District level, and for non-formal activities in support of local projects.

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[1] National Development Plan V, 1979-85. Gaborone, Government Printer, 1978, pp. 5/1 to 5/67.

Of equal importance was the chance to include several Development Projects in the Plan. For these special funds would be required. Failure to include projects in the National Plan would make it extremely difficult to introduce them later on. On the other hand, the Ministry could not propose an inflated list since both internal and external finance was limited. Priorities therefore had to be settled and for NFE this was particularly difficult since there was as yet insufficient knowledge on which to base proposals. In the end, five NFE projects were included in the Ministry request for development funds; these were, a national literacy programme, the building of District Education Centres, the construction of a Residential Centre, extensions to the headquarters building and the development of an education broadcasting facility. The Centres and the broadcasting facility are shared projects with other Departments of the Ministry.

The programme

The Department inherited from the BEC a system of correspondence education and this naturally had to be one national programme to be continued. It also inherited an officer concerned with home economics, though the programme was of limited extent. It soon became clear however that the central programme expected from the Department was one which would reach out to those who had been largely deprived of formal education. That is to say the Department should thus inaugurate a nationwide effort to eradicate illiteracy and to provide a system of basic education for the urban and rural poor. The home economics interest would fit into this side of the work as would also a newly established health education programme. There were thus two main activities to be catered for; correspondence education at the secondary level and a major drive against illiteracy, leading to a continuing programme of basic education. The Department also inherited from the BEC two experts in radio programming and from these it was possible to make a start with a media section. Staff were also available to form the nucleus of production and administrative sections. The biggest deficiency in the resources of the Department was a national network through which the various activities could be disseminated to the public as a whole. By as late as 1978 there were only three of the nine Districts served by District officers and it was clearly essential to remedy this situation. Unfortunately, this could not be done immediately since in a civil service appointments have to be approved and be on the official establishment register, and this takes time however urgent the need may be. During 1979 two more Districts were covered and by

1980 a further two. In 1981 all Districts had non-formal education offices, together with four sub offices and a regional centre in the Western Kalahari, (Map 2). The field officers together with a colleague at Headquarters constitute the Field Section in DNFE, the vital link with the communities being served.

Organisation of the Department

The Department was initially established with six inter-related Sections, for correspondence education, for informal programmes, for the media, production, administration and the 'field'. (see Diagram 1). There was inevitably some wrangle over the term informal programmes, dealing with literacy and other related activities. The section could have been called non-formal, but it was decided not to do this since the Department as a whole carried that title and it would have been confusing to have a section with the same name.

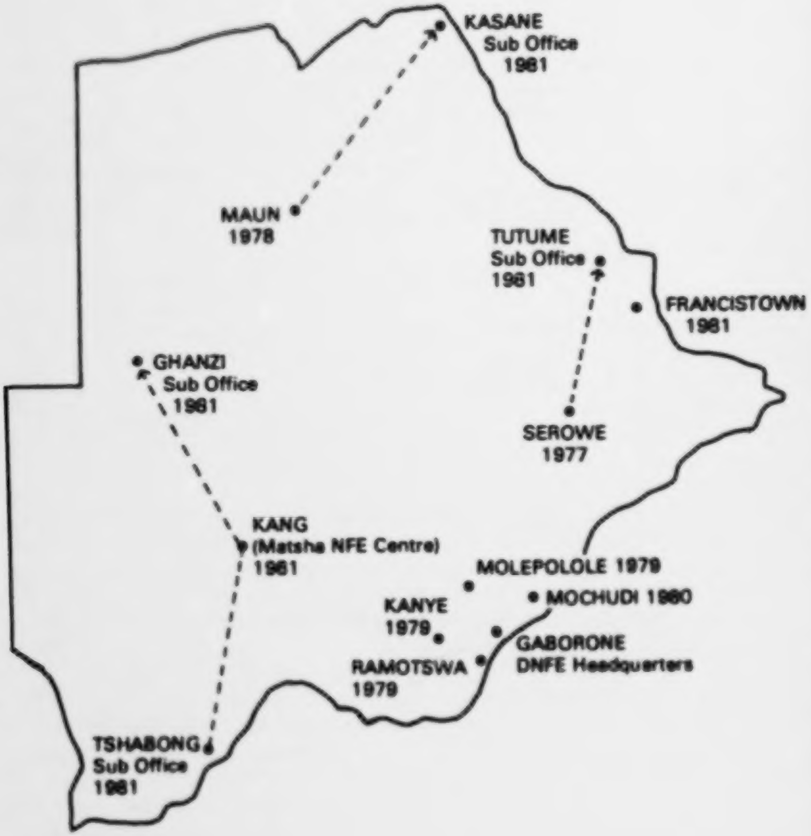
This organisation had the merit of being simple, and at the same time it enabled each Section to learn to work together as a team. People tend to respond better when organised in small groups since this enables them to express their own individuality. However, most operations affected more than one Section and it was imperative also to stress their inter-dependence. To ensure that there was good liaison, regular staff meetings were held, a matter to be referred to later.

Each Section had a head whose responsibility it was to oversee the work. Difficulties sometimes arose because the civil service bureaucracy did not allow such people to receive additional remuneration. Indeed, to ensure that suitable staff were designated Heads it was occasionally the case that they were junior to others in the Section. Such are the irritations which arise when tied to an inflexible staffing machine.

A Headquarters Building

It was not until October 1979 that the Department was able to move into its newly built headquarters, financed through a World Bank Education loan. The buildings were too small for the work almost from their inception. A particular problem arose when it was realised that far too little space had been allocated for storage both for in-coming materials and for finished products awaiting transportation to the Districts or to individual students. Designers of new buildings for NFE should remember to allow much more storage space than was earmarked in the Botswana building. It will be noted that the production area has been designed to allow for a circulation of supplies. Material arrives at the store room; it can then be taken as required to the print shop and straight on for collating; from there it goes to the document store, and finally to a despatch room (Diagram 2).

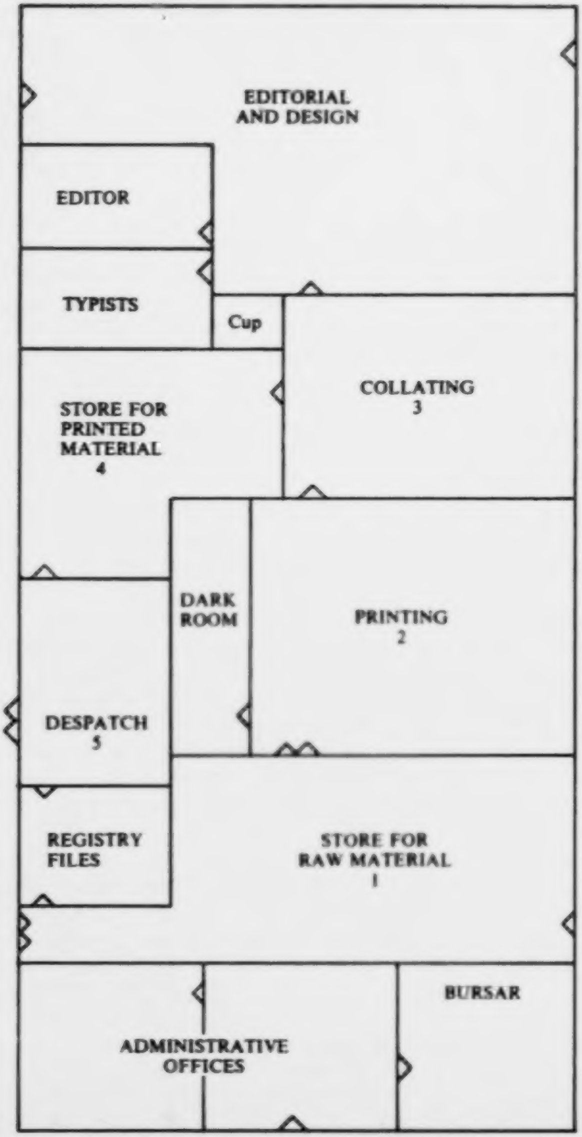
Two separate buildings were provided for DNFE. Building A houses the


KASANE
Sub Office
1981
MAUN
1978
TUTUME
Sub Office
1981
FRANCISTOWN
1981
GHANZI
Sub Office
1981
SEROWE
1977
KANG
(Matsha NFE Centre)
1981
MOLEPOLOLE 1979
MOCHUDI 1980
KANYE
1979
GABORONE
DNFE Headquarters
RAMOTSWA
1979
TSHABONG
Sub Office
1981

Map 2

DNFE delivery system, giving dates when District Offices were opened.

Diagram 2. DNFE Building B


EDITORIAL AND DESIGN
EDITOR
TYPISTS
Cup
COLLATING 3
STORE FOR PRINTED MATERIAL 4
DARK ROOM
PRINTING 2
DESPATCH 5
REGISTRY FILES
STORE FOR RAW MATERIAL 1
BURSAR
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Numbers show the flow of material. Scale approximately 1 cm to a Meter.

directorate and the offices and work rooms of the programme staff. There is also a Seminar Room in which a Documentation Library is kept. The courtyard has a stage which is used by amateur groups for rehearsals. Eventually when outdoor lighting equipment is installed it will be possible for the courtyard to serve as a theatre. Building B has the administrative and production sections. The original architect's plan was to provide all facilities in one building; it had to be pointed out that this would mean the noise from the print shop would permeate into all the offices. It is extraordinary how impractical architects are, possibly because they seldom work in the buildings they design.

Staff

Having settled the overall shape of the Department, the next task was to work on the gradual build up of staff. Since the whole of government was being held to strict ceilings for personnel, it was inevitable that DNFE would not get all the staff it needed straight away. Table 1 shows the composition of the staff in 1979, 1980 and 1981. It will be seen that DNFE was treated very well, largely because of the great support it received from senior officers in the Ministry, a further vindication for having located it within the Ministry rather than on the periphery.

The staff list gives a picture of the range of human resources which a comprehensive department of non-formal education should include. Of the professionals there is a need for programme developers and designers in the main fields to be covered, together with skilled editors to convert the raw material into language suitable for publication. Programmers for radio are also required. The technical staff includes graphic artists, lay-out specialists, printers and photographic experts. And to these must be added that essential, if less noticed, cadre of finance and administrative officers with the equally essential retinue of drivers, messengers, collators, cleaners, night-watchmen and gardeners. In a category of their own, but vital to the success of the work, were the secretaries and copy typists. With the team which was emerging by 1980 it was possible to envisage DNFE being able to operate effectively.

Such were the people destined to work at headquarters. But what of the operational staff in the field? During these initial years it was the intention to deploy in each District of the country a professional officer, supported by a secretary and a driver together with a team of extension workers. It took some time before these vacancies could be filled, as will be described later in the narrative.

There had been a suggestion that an all-purpose Research and Evaluation Officer should be on the establishement. There is undoubtedly an ever present need for research and for formative and summative evaluation. It is questionable, however, whether one person could undertake all these duties effectively. To consider research first, it is desirable that as many people as

Table 1. Staff of the Department, 1979, 1980 and 1981

		1979	*1980*	*1981*
Direction	Chief Education Officer	1	1	1
	Counterpart Chief Education Officer	1	1	1
Professional	Principal, Matsha NFE Centre	1	1	1
	[1] Course Development Officers	4	8	9
	[2] District Adult Education Officers	7	8	11
	Radio Producers	1	1	2
	Literacy Assistants	–	30	120
Technical	[3] Technicians	2	3	4
General Administration	Chief Editor	1	1	1
	Bursar	1	1	1
	Administrative Staff	8	9	9
Secretarial		7	12	14
Industrial	Drivers Junior Printers Messengers Collators Groundsmen	8	25	38
	Total	42	102	212

Notes

The terminology is not exactly as used in the Government Establishment Register, nor are the categories of staff given in the official order. Rather, the list has been compiled to be intelligible to those unaware of Botswana official practice. The numbers in each section are correct.

[1] The Course Development Officers are the professional programme staff at headquarters. Some are subject specialists dealing with correspondence courses, others are the programme designers in literacy, home economics and environmental health.

[2] There are two categories of District Adult Education Officer. Those with a degree are in the 'professional' group; those with a University Diploma are in the 'general administration' class. In both categories, junior staff newly recruited may be designated initially as Assistants.

[3] The Technicians are the artists and designers in the editorial office and printers holding a technical qualification. In 1981 the four established posts were filled as follows:
Printer (1), Graphic Artist (1), Assistant editor, lay-out designer (1), Vacant (1).

In 1981, out of the 212 established posts, 150 were away from headquarters.

possible should be involved in those aspects of research which depend primarily on the straight collection of data. For the more complex operations it would seem that the University Institute of Adult Education was a more appropriate body to do the work. As to evaluation, there is bound to be some doubt about an institution being self-evaluated. An objective independent assessment certainly carries more weight. This is not to suggest that people should not be involved in evaluating their own work; all ought to be encouraged to be making formative evaluation of their activities. But again, when it comes to full-scale evaluation exercises, an outside body ought to provide the professional personnel, and that again suggests that the University is the right place to turn for assistance. In the case of DNFE, there were more pressing staff priorities, though eventually a Research Officer solely for the literacy programme was appointed.

It was very desirable that all staff should be aware of what was going on and, as far as possible, feel a sense of pride at the achievements of the Department. Also a community develops a better spirit when its members are given the opportunity of expressing their views, venting their wrath, and participating in decision making. To this end, the first Wednesday of every quarter (February, May, August, November) was devoted to staff meetings, and on these occasions District Officers were called in to headquarters. A general staff meeting gave an opportunity to brief everyone on the state of the Department and for those who wished to do so to raise particular issues. Throughout the day there would also be programme meetings amongst the professionals and a session on administrative matters. The day ensured that field and headquarters were kept in touch with each other.

But perhaps the most significant gatherings of all were the regular Heads of Section meetings. At these, all aspects of the Department's work were discussed and problems could be thought through. Following the meetings, Heads of Section were requested to relay to their own staff anything which had come up other than issues regarded as being confidential.

One of the disadvantages of being a branch of government soon manifested itself over the appointment of staff. One might have expected that the Head of the Department would be consulted on all appointments being made. I was soon to learn that this was not the case, and even for several senior posts the Directorate of Personnel simply assigned people to the work. The result was that at times the Department had to make do with quite unsuitable personnel, a problem further exacerbated by the slowness with which the University Institute of Adult Education commenced offering professional training in non-formal education.

It will be appropriate at this point to mention two other disabilities which flowed from being part of the civil service. Not only could staff be assigned to the Department without consultation, but also they could be moved without warning, and one lived under the constant threat that good people could, at the whim of some official, be whisked away to other duties. But the greatest difficulty arose over obtaining promotion, since civil service rules lay down fairly rigidly when a person is due for a rise. Whilst it is possible to withhold promotion it seems impossible to accelerate it when a really good person was found. So often the reward for hard and conscientious work was simply to be told to soldier on at the same grade. There is no doubt that it is not just that salaries are often more attractive in the private sector which encourages people to leave the public service; it is this sheer inability to recognise that good work deserves recognition and that leaders and those ready to take higher responsibility are not necessarily to be found amongst those who have done longest service; often they are the dead wood. One suspects, sadly, that this situation is not peculiar to Botswana. International aid organisations and donors wishing to promote education should look more closely at the machinery of government; it is often not more school buildings or other capital plant which are required, but an overhaul of the administrative devices which lie behind and which can so easily snuff out the enthusiasm and commitment of those who are working in the field.

Finance

The recurrent estimates for the Department increased at about 17% per annum; one of the highest growth rates in government and as much money as the Department could safely assimilate.

The recurrent budget in 1981/82 allowed for an expenditure of Pula 478,000. In those days 1.6 Pula was equivalent to a pound sterling, or stated differently, a Pula and United States dollar were about equal. The recurrent budget covered salaries and wages for the established staff and amounted to 71% of all expenditures. The other large allocation was under a vote then called 'training', which in fact included materials, paper, ink, etc. and the fees paid to the tutor markers of the correspondence courses. The other major programme of DNFE, the national literacy programme, was financed through development funds, and in 1981/82 received P 1,044,000 (approximately £650,000). In total, therefore, DNFE had P 1,522,000 at its disposal. The departmental estimates are given in full in appendix 1.

There is one vote which is especially significant in a Department concerned with NFE and this is mentioned because in some countries similar provision is not made. That is the vote known in Botswana for 'temporary assistance'.

Whilst it is possible to plan what are the most likely demands to be met and programmes to be mounted, one has also to be ready for the unexpected. There is the need to deal with a particular issue or to take up a wholly unforeseen challenge; indeed in NFE the only thing which can be predicted with certainty is that something unexpected is bound to emerge. For this reason, it was essential to have available a supply of money to meet such eventualities. Furthermore, it was sometimes necessary to call on the assistance of outside professionals for short periods using their expertise to solve particular problems. Occasions arose for the services of a person, knowledgeable in the subject or gifted with a special skill, usually for a comparatively short time. And whereas many Departments are similarly placed, because NFE covers such a multiplicity of activities, the need for part-time help of this kind is especially felt. The temporary assistance vote in 1981 of 3100 pula enabled DNFE to obtain the help it needed.

Editorial and Production Work

The production section of DNFE was very much at the heart of all activities. Every programme, whether connected with literacy and basic education or with correspondence courses, made heavy demands on the editorial and printing staff, and therefore the Head of Section is a key person in an organisation such as this. DNFE was fortunate to have a good Chief Editor, supported by an equally efficient and devoted Chief Printer; and under them a fine staff which included sub-editors, many engaged as 'temporary assistants', designers, graphic artists, printers, collators and despatch clerks. In all a team of some twenty people. Equipment consisted of three off-set litho printing presses, a small collating machine, and a guillotine. Demands to have a large collating machine installed were rejected since this would have made redundant a number of loyal and hard working staff. In a country suffering from considerable unemployment it did not seem to be proper to add to the problem. There was also a well equipped photographic dark room.

Before leaving this section, a point made earlier will stand repetition namely that almost every activity in NFE requires the active involvement of editors and printers. The printed word is still the most potent from of communication. The requirements of the correspondence courses section ran into several hundred items and the literacy programme added a further fifty. In a sense DNFE was a mini publishing house. To ensure that the raw supplies were always available and that finished products were ready on time there had to be close liaison between Editor and Printer, with regular stock taking checks being made.

Media Section

A small but useful media section has been developed concerned mainly with the production of radio programmes, but also with material on cassette. The section is equipped with Uher recorders and a high-speed cassette replicator. At headquarters there is a small recording studio suitable for two and three person interviews. Some material was put on cassette and distributed to District offices, though in retrospect not enough of this was done. Material on cassette can be used at any time and does not depend on groups meeting at specified times; nor will the unpredictable vagaries of the atmosphere distort reception. The biggest problem is usually ensuring a regular supply of batteries, but this is equally applicable for radio.

Radio programmes are an integral part of the provision for correspondence students and there is also a weekly broadcast on the literacy programme. These activities will be discussed later. Other programmes on topics of general interest are produced as well as a weekly NFE News programme which tells the public about activities taking place both by DNFE and other agencies.

The Delivery System: the Field Section

The work of all sections of the Department only had meaning if there was an effective delivery system into the country as a whole. The lack of such a system when DNFE was established has already been noted. Consequently it was a first priority to redress this lack as soon as possible, the aim being to establish in every District an office staffed initially with a professional officer, known as the District Adult Education Officer, a secretary and a driver. This was the minimum requirement. Map 2 shows the development of the delivery system and how within three years it was possible to have representatives in every District, an essential prerequisite for the proper functioning of both the correspondence and informal programmes. For one thing is quite certain; NFE cannot be operated from an office in the capital.

It was essential, however, that there should be an officer at headquarters whose main responsibility was to keep in touch with the District offices. This person would make regular visits to the Districts. In Botswana this often entailed long and arduous journeys. Personal visits were a means of overcoming the sense of loneliness felt by out-posted staff. It has to be remembered that in some Districts the postal service is but poorly developed and contact by radio telephone often impossible due to adverse atmospheric conditions. Having a field officer at headquarters also meant that problems peculiar to the District staff would be raised at the Heads of Sections staff meetings.

Unfortunately, due to shortage of staff, no Head of the Field Section could be appointed during the time under review, and the work had to be shared, though mainly undertaken by myself, an unsatisfactory arrangement when it is remembered that by 1981 there were some ten offices in operation.

District officers were charged with four principal duties, of which the first was the supervision of the junior staff assigned to them. The second duty was to be the channel by which nationally planned programmes could be operated in the District. The District officer was thus responsible for contacting students studying by correspondence and making arrangements for study centres; this involved getting to know as many students individually as was possible and helping them with their problems; it also involved registering new students. It entailed organising and managing the National Literacy Programme in the District. It also meant that the District Office became the distribution point for materials of other programmes of the Department, such as home economics and health. The third duty was to work with the District Extension team on locally orientated projects and programmes. We shall return to this later. The fourth task was to be a source of information on NFE to all who needed it. The District Officer should thus be aware of what was being done in other parts of the country so that this information could be passed on. A small reference library, donated by the British Government, was placed in every District Office. This collection of books included texts which the Officer would find useful when assisting correspondence students; it had several works on NFE for the self education of the officer; and it had a number of general reference books such as dictionaries and atlases. As a first means of keeping Officers in the field abreast with developments in NFE, a system was instituted whereby reports and other material from overseas were circulated to field officers, each recipient being asked to hold the material for no more then seven days and then pass it on; a system which sadly was more than some District Officers were capable of operating. At Headquarters a comprehensive documentation library was established.

District offices were equipped with a four-wheel drive vehicle, and other means of transporation were supplied for the literacy staff. One of the vehicles at headquarters was a five ton lorry to deliver supplies. Each District office had a duplicating machine.

Finally, before leaving the Field Section, emphasis must be placed on the critical importance of the District Officer. It is a lonely post, calling for strict personal discipline, total commitment to the work, sound professional understanding coupled with a warm humanity embracing the ability to be concerned equally with the lowly and deprived as with the well endowed. If there is one person on whom the success or failure of programmes in NFE depends, it is the Field Officer, the person who ultimately is responsible for carrying the message. It follows that the greatest care should be taken over their recruitment and training.

Buildings in the Districts

NFE is not demanding when it comes to capital requirements. Usually borrowed premises are the ones most used. Nevertheless, some buildings are needed and in particular there must be a base in each District from which the staff can operate. It has already been noted that the pattern in Botswana would be for every District eventually to be equipped with an Education Centre. These premises would be on a modest scale, providing offices, a meeting room and storage space. Two such Centres, at Maun and Molepolole were in operation during the period under review. These Districts were thus equipped with buildings which could be used throughout the year for meetings of DNFE staff, and thereby gave a local focus for the work. In six other District capitals, Francistown, Ramotswa, Mochudi, Serowe, Tsabong and Kanye, DNFE rented office space, since it was essential that the District Adult Education Officer had a base from which to work, and which also provided a depot for the storage of supplies.

Residential Centre

In a somewhat remote part of the Western Kalahari, the government had established an educational complex to serve the needs of a widely dispersed population. The complex included a Secondary School, and originally a Brigade; it also included a residential centre for NFE. The Centre has a teaching block comprising a large room which can accommodate up to 100 people and can be sub-divided, a teaching aids production room, a store and a comfortable lounge which can also be used for groups. Two residential hostels for 60 participants also each have a lounge. The Centre shares the Dining Hall and the Library with the Secondary School and can, of course, make use of the school sleeping facilities during holidays. The Centre was originally conceived when the World Bank Education Loan I was being negotiated in 1975. It was seen as fulfilling three functions. First to be an NFE Centre for dwellers of the Kalahari. This would be especially valuable since the small and remote communities in the region needed a place at which meetings and workshops could be held. The Centre would also encourage the maintenance of the distinctive Kalahari culture. Secondly it would provide DNFE with a residential centre at which national training events could be held. Thirdly it would provide all extension agencies with a facility they could use. There is no doubt that the Centre provides not only DNFE but also the entire NFE network with an invaluable resource; a place open all the year for training courses, seminars, meetings of students and other activities. Whether the Centre is used to the full will depend in large measure on the inventiveneess and sheer hard work of the staff. What is indisputable is that without such a Centre DNFE would not be able so adequately to fulfil its responsibilities.

Public Relations

If DNFE was to be successful in opening up new channels of learning for those previously denied this opportunity, it was essential that the country as a whole should be supportive of the enterprise. A branch of education as new and as little understood as NFE has to be explained to many people. Mention has already been made of the value of formal and non-formal being in the same Ministry so that ideas can be exchanged within the family. But there is a need also for those in higher authority, such as Members of Parliament, Chiefs, and senior administrators in other Ministries to appreciate the contribution which NFE is making to national development. This form of public relations is often undertaken by University Departments of Adult Education. With the establishment of DNFE there was clearly a need to explain ourselves to our superiors. To this end a short document entitled 'Briefing Notes on Non-formal Education' was published and given to every Member of Parliament and other dignatories. On one memorable occasion the majority of the Botswana Cabinet visited the Department to learn at first hand what it was doing.

There is too the need to keep the public as a whole aware of what is happening in this branch of education. Every opportunity was taken to have articles and stories published in the newspaper or broadcast on radio. In this way positive attitudes towards NFE were nurtured, and this greatly helped the field officers when engaged in commencing programmes in communities as yet unreached by NFE.

Two other publications deserve mention. The first, originally published by the BEC, is a handbook to help officials and members of the Village Extension teams to undertake their duties more effectively. The second, for the public as a whole, is entitled 'Learning Opportunities in Botswana', listing the facilities which are available for all kinds of continuing education. The booklet, which is available without charge, has both subject and institution indexes. Its usefulness will depend on how frequently it is updated.

University Involvement in Non-formal Education

The main contribution to the work of DNFE of the University Institute of Adult Education is the provision of professional training courses in adult education. The first to be established was for a Diploma. The course requires two years of full-time study and this made it difficult for agencies to spare people to attend, since the vacancies thus created could not be filled. Having an official away from duties for such a long period could mean cancellation of a programme. Many felt that a better and more appropriate course could have been provided either in one year of full time study or by a system of part release spread over two years, with the students working on assignments when at their duty stations. This has the obvious advantages of making it easier to release people for the course and of increasing their number, since there is little dislocation caused. It also helps to relate the theoretical part of the course to the practicalities being experienced in the field. This system had been adopted many years previously in Harare and found to work well. It was therefore a relief when the Institute decided to adopt a somewhat similar procedure when introducing a lower level certificate course.

Agency Work

A feature of a Department of NFE is that it should assist other agencies in the promotion of NFE. DNFE thus became a service agency providing skills and material for those in need. As such it was able to assist the Prisons Department with suitable programmes for prisoners; the Land Board in designing teaching material for its staff; providing study material for the Ministry of Local Government and Lands in preparation for village and urban surveys; providing local and village authorities with a handbook writtten in simple language, on public administration; giving ideas to the Census Board when it was preparing the national census; and in many other ways DNFE offered a helping hand to sister agencies, sometimes with programme proposals and sometimes in a more concrete fashion by actually designing and printing material. This is an important element in the work since it enabled DNFE's influence to spread throughout the non-formal network.

Integrated Rural Development

DNFE forms an integral part in the total national strategy to provide non-formal education for those in most need. The delivery system which has been established is a vehicle which all can make use of; its professional staff are available to be of assistance wherever this is appropriate.

Proposals[1] placed before the RECC in 1982 for an improved and more integrated approach to NFE extension had indicated that DNFE should be a prominent partner in the work. In a basic education package comprising the four components of literacy/numeracy, skill training, health education and civic and social education, DNFE would be the driving force in the first and last named, and could also contribute to the other two. The National Literacy Programme is a start on the first component.

An instrument had been fashioned which could operate throughout the country. The aim was to enable the greatest number of people to take part in learning experiences previously denied to them. A new dynamic and respected force was at work in Botswana. The DNFE logo was to be seen throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was at last being recognised that non-formal education was a permanent partner in the education family.

The Major Programmes

All that has been written so far about DNFE has meaning only if it facilitates the development of the two major programmes for which it was responsible, that of second chance secondary correspondence courses and the national literacy programme. The structure of the department and its modus operandi should be judged solely on its ability to carry forward successfully the work in the field. The established staff of DNFE should be considered worthy of the trust placed in them solely by their degree of selfless dedication to the people they are serving.

An examination of the two programmes will now be made. As the correspondence courses were an inherited task from the BEC there will be rather less detail about them than the national literacy programme which had to be created de novo. Both, however, were important in the construction of a ladder of advancement for out-of-school men, women and youths. chapter III of this book looks back at these two programmes and attempts to evaluate their successes and shortcomings.

II. The Botswana National Literacy Programme (NLP)

Soundings made in a few locations were sufficient to make certain that if a literacy programme was launched there would be no lack of people wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn.

This contention was further reinforced by the several efforts which had been made to run literacy classes. Khama the Great, in the nineteenth century, had encouraged adults to learn how to read and write, work which was taken up and developed by Missionary Societies. There have been numerous, small-scale, literacy projects; the most notable were the classes run under Christian auspices in the Selebi-Phikwi and Ghanzi areas, and in 1977 and 1978 limited programmes mounted by the BEC in Districts near Gaborone, though remarkably and unfortunately numeracy was omitted. From all this work some useful data were obtained.

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[1] Townsend Coles, E.K. Rural Rejuvenation. Duplicated paper Gaborone, Ministry of Education, 1982.

It was quite clear that the new Department was expected to take a fresh look at the problem of illiteracy in Botswana and come up with proposals which would embrace the entire country. Small scale programmes are all very well and in the absense of other initiatives are certainly better than nothing. So too with pilot projects; no doubt often necessary, but at some stage decisions have to be taken to go forward to full-scale operations or drop the work altogether. Furthermore, there are aspects of a programme which cannot be tested until carried out on a large scale. Procedures which can be readily adopted when the work is localised are often inappropriate or indeed impossible when placed in a national context.

There were no firm data available on the degree of illiteracy in Botswana. There had been various attempts at estimating the size of the problem, but these were no more reliable than what were essentially intuitive guesses. The consensus of views seemed to suggest that a third of the adult population in 1980 over 16 (some 200,000) were functionally illiterate. Two small surveys carried out in 1979 by DNFE seemed to confirm this. A request to include questions relating to literacy in the 1981 census was summarily rejected on the grounds that it would add a further element to an already full census questionnaire. A chance was thus lost to obtain an accurate picture of the size of the problem, together with its demographic distribution. However, since most observers were agreed that something approaching a quarter of a million people could not read or write, it was evident that here was an issue which the Department had to face.

In retrospect, it is quite clear that it was this decision to tackle the problem of illiteracy on a national scale which established DNFE firmly in the minds and understanding of colleagues in the Ministry of Education. NFE was losing its mystery; here it was actually doing something concrete and visible; no longer playfuly dabbling in little projects here and there but getting to grips with what was recognised as being a major national educational issue. But the positive results went further than the parent Ministry; officials in other Ministries, and most notably that for Finance and Development Planning, took notice that DNFE meant business and was an institution worthy of support. Possibly one reason why NFE is so often starved of funds is because it never appears to be doing anything sufficiently important and concerted.

The decision to go ahead with a national drive to eradicate illiteracy was taken at a propitious time. For some years literacy programmes had been somewhat under an international cloud: few would dispute the desirability of encouraging people to learn to read and write, but the results of efforts which had been made seemed disappointing. Despite the large sums of money which had been allocated for the work, the advance towards a literate world had been painfully slow and at time indiscernable. The much publicised UNESCO functional literacy approach[1] had not proved to be the panacea which advocates of it had anticipated. With rapidly rising populations, the number of illiterates[2] was still growing in most of the Third World. By the mid 70's there was mounting dismay; a rising tide of illiteracy and little unanimity as to how best to tackle the problem. It was at this time that two complementary shifts in opinion took place. The first was a move away from what might be termed the extremist functional approach to something more balanced, in which the teaching of simple reading, writing and numeracy were brought back into the middle of the stage, rather than being in the wings. This was what the learners really wanted, however much academic theoreticians might claim otherwise. For the men and women who were eager to learn, literacy and numeracy were the functional skills they yearned for; if these could be taught in the context of their daily occupations and interests and in a manner which would enhance their lives by enabling them to perform the normal duties expected of a citizen, so much the better. But first and foremost was the desire to read and write, and learning these skills must be paramount. Gradually as time wore on there was a fresh recognition of what should be entailed in a literacy programme.

The second shift which took place was amongst the donor agencies working in the Third World. Whereas there had been great emphasis on the provision of capital plant, and particularly of prestigious projects, there was a growing realisation that development primarily depended on the people themselves and that much more stress should be placed on improving their quality of life. This called for new approaches to formal education; it also gave considerable impetus to NFE, and especially to basic education for those who had been largely neglected, the urban and rural poor. Thus literacy programmes took on regained prominence; whereas for a time it had been virtually impossible to arouse the interest of potential donors, now the reverse was beginning to be manifest. These two moves relating to literacy made it a propitious time in which to be focusing attention in Botswana on the needs of those who previously had been deprived of an adequate preparation to enable them to face life in a modern society with confidence.

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[1] UNESCO/UNDP The experimental world literacy programme: a critical assessment. Paris, UNESCO, 1976.

[2] The latest figures indicate that there were 760 million illiterates in 1970, but by 1985 the figure had risen to 900 million (from Lind A. and Johnston A. 'Adult Literacy in the Third World', Stockholm, SIDA, 1986).

Contemporary commentators on literacy programmes are generally agreed that success hinges in large measure on the degree of political support accorded to the work[1]. The most quoted initiatives as having achieved their objectives come almost entirely from socialist countries in which political clout and public coercion are prominent factors in the operation. Russia, Cuba, Tanzania, Somalia, Ethiopia and Nicaragua are countries which are commonly cited as having organised successful literacy campaigns. Indeed, the notion is often voiced that without the kind of discipline to which countries such as those refered to are most readily susceptible, it is not possible to maintain public motivation for the effort which is involved if learning is to be sustained and the end results to be of value. In short, can a national literacy programme be successfully mounted in a non-socialist society? Small scale projects are being satisfactorily implemented throughout the world, in widely differing environments. The question still remains whether a mass national initiative is feasible under political regimes which do not espouse the socialist doctrine. In Africa, not only the Botswana proposals but those also from Kenya and Malawi are of interest as three contrasting examples of literacy programmes in a non-socialist, democratic ambiance[2].

Botswana is a democratic country. There was no doubt that a degree of political support would be forthcoming, though in the event the failure to obtain presidential sponsorship was an unexpected setback. Nevertheless, the Minister of Education was unswerving in his encouragement for the work and increasingly there was pressure from Members of Parliament for the extension of the programme. As a society Botswana does not subscribe to the kind of mass discipline of socialist countries. People are regarded as individuals, each with the freedom to chart their own destinies. A literacy endeavour may have national political approval as well as the moral support of local Chiefs and Headmen; it is still left to each man and woman to decide whether or not to participate. And under such circumstances could a national literacy programme be conducted successfully? This is still an unanswered question. What is clear is that the free atmosphere of Botswana places additional stress on the quality of leadership of the staff involved, since in large measure it is they, rather than the politicians, who have to give and maintain impetus to the work.

The initial decision to launch a national literacy programme was taken towards the end of 1978. 1979 was to be a consultative year during which an outline plan would be drawn up. This would be followed by an experimental year, 1980, with full-scale operations commencing in 1981. Towards the end of that year I would be handing over responsibility for the Department to my counterpart. Therefore the narrative which follows covers the year 1979 to 1981, from consultation through experimentation to national implementation.

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[1] "The success or failure of a literacy activity does not ultimately derive from economic or technical issues, but rather from the existance or not of a firm political will with capacity or organise and mobilise the people around a literacy project". Torres R.M. Nicaragua: Revolucion Popular – Educacion Popular: Editorial Linea, 'ines cries' Mexico, 1985. Quoted by Lind A. and Johnston A. 'Adult Literacy in the Third World', Stockholm, SIDA, 1986.

[2] See Fordham, P. One Billion Illiterates (Bonn, DSE, 1985) for articles providing a means of contrasting these three literacy programmes.

1979, the year for consultation

National Meeting

Although there was no doubt that the proposed literacy programme would be welcomed and supported by those for whom it was intended to assist, it was essential that there should be the fullest consultation with all sections of the community about it. The first step was taken in February when a letter of invitation to a national meeting was sent to all Ministries, District and Town authorities, voluntary organisations and the University. The purpose of the meeting was to raise the question whether a national literacy programme should now be contemplated and if so what initial steps should be taken. The meeting, held at the beginning of March, was fully representative of the parties involved. The Minister of Education, the Hon. K.P. Morake, opened the proceedings by promising the wholehearted support of his Ministry in the endeavour, a promise most amply fulfilled. By an overwhelming majority, the meeting endorsed the launching of a national programme aimed at the total eradication of illiteracy in Botswana and called upon the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education to convene a Policy Group to draw up a paper on the subject. Before this meeting took place, members of DNFE visited a cross-section of communities, to test orally the reaction of villages to the idea of a literacy programme. Universally the proposal was met with enthusiasm.

National Policy

The Policy Group met in June under the chairmanship of the Co-ordinator of the Rural Development Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. It was noteworthy that the Permanent Secretary should have invited a senior official from Finance to undertake this work, and important that the invitation was readily accepted. The Group consisted of representatives of the Ministries most likely to be involved, together with two spokesmen for the Districts and one from the University Institute of Adult Education. In July a memorandum was drawn up which outlined the general lines to be adopted for a national initiative against illiteracy.[1] The term initiative was used instead of campaign which implied a short-term effort rather than a sustained long term drive. Later the word 'initiative' was dropped in preference for the more readily understood 'programme'.

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[1] The eradication of illiteracy in Botswana: memorandum to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, July 1979.

The policy document envisaged a co-operative effort between Central and local (District) government. Each District would have the right to determine whether, when and in what measure it would participate in the programme. Central Government would supply the permanent staff, the materials and provide training; successful implementation, however, could only be achieved with the wholehearted commitment of District authorities. It was essential, therefore, that each local government unit should decide on its own whether it wished to participate. In the event, all did!

Another, equally important, form of co-operation was sought. This was inter-ministerial co-operation between the operational Ministries. Literacy, and often more potently numeracy, were to be one aspect only of the operation. Enabling people to learn skills which would enhance the quality of their lives was to be the vital complement of the work being undertaken by the Ministry of Education. Such training could precede, be simultaneous with, and follow the learning of reading and number. The basic education package, to which reference has already been made, would involve all arms of government, as well as many non-governmental agencies. An integrated approach to basic and continuing education was being advocated. To this end, all Ministries would be enlisted onto the proposed National Literacy Committee; the learning materials would include topics of concern to them; and all could use the delivery system which was to emerge. The response from Ministries was patchy, some preferring to guard jealously their own empires. The Home Economics and Health units in DNFE were able to work closely with the Ministry of Health Education Unit; unfortunately, other Ministries were less forthcoming.

There was considerable discussion on the language or languages to be employed. Botswana has two official languages, Setswana and English. There are, however, sizeable minorities which habitually speak neither. It is known to be pedagogically sound practice to teach a person initially to read in the mother tongue: would this be permitted in Botswana? At the same time a cogent case could be made for providing instruction in English. Certainly as far as urban dwellers are concerned, the writing which needs to be read is largely in English rather than Setswana. Goods in shops, road signs, commercially produced newspapers, advertisements, are almost exclusively in English. Ought not due consideration be given to teaching English? It was at this juncture that political rather than educational or functional considerations carried most weight. To achieve national unity, there had to be the submergence of local, tribal, languages; this was the practice in formal education and this example had likewise to be followed in non-formal education despite the fact that this seemed likely to decrease the motivation of some of the potential learners. The programme therefore was to provide literacy in Setswana, and to be complemented by instruction in basic number. It was not long, however, before there were demands for literacy in English.

The policy group had noted the lack of success attributable to the UNESCO sponsored selective-intensive functional approach. Indeed, it was felt that the word functional was being so misused as to be almost meaningless. In some quarters learning the skills of reading and writing were being seen as the non-functional element in a literacy effort, and functionality was being confined only to the learning of applied skills. What is functional should be defined by the learners; if it is literacy and numeracy applied in their daily lives, these are the essential functional components which participants are anxious to learn. Note also was taken of the conscientization approach of Paulo Freire, and whilst Freire's insistence that the literacy content must have relevance to the learners, the political element in the method was not seen as being appropriate to Botswana. There was also a negative response to a somewhat militant mass campaign.

The approach which suited the political, social and cultural conditions of Botswana was a voluntary national programme in which, over a period of time, all men, women and youths should be given the opportunity of participating.

The document proposed a scale and pace for the programme. The initial operation should be planned over a six year period, with some 50,000 participants being invovled each year at an annual expenditure of around a million Pula. The policy group regarded this as a realistic assessment of what was possible and added 'that anything far short of this will fail in its intention of ridding the country of illiteracy'.

Four operations should be commenced simultaneously, once the overall proposal had been accepted. A National Literacy Committee should be established to oversee the programme; exhaustive consultation in the Districts should be undertaken so that realistic plans of operation are drawn up; work should start on the designing, testing and production of materials; and finally such research as could be undertaken should be embarked upon. It had been hoped that the last task would be taken on by the University Institute of Adult Education, but unfortunately other commitments made that impossible. Finally, the document ends with the affirmation that 'the eradication of Illiteracy is a vital task which should no longer be delayed. In order that the programme should carry the prestige it deserves, the group hopes that the President himself will make a public statement on the matter, and that the Departments of government will respond to the challenge before the nation'.

A few weeks after the submission of the policy document the all-clear was received to go ahead with the programme. The Deputy Permanment Secretary of the Ministry of Education was given the overall responsibility for its management, with executive duties being remitted to DNFE. The National Literacy Programme was to be a reality.

A National Committee

Although executive responsibility for the programme was vested in the Ministry of Education, it was recognised from the outset that the operation had to be seen as a co-operative effort between the line Ministries together with the Ministry of Finance on the one hand, and local authorities and non-governmental interests on the other. To achieve this it was essential that there should be a national forum in which all could participate in determining policy and strategy. It was considered whether the Rural Extension Co-ordinating Committee (RECC) might undertake the supervision of the programme, but this was rejected in favour of setting up an independent body on two grounds. First because the RECC was already over-loaded with work and could not be expected to take on the detailed supervision of a new major national operation; secondly, since DNFE had to undertake the day-to-day work involved it was deemed desirable and possibly constitutionally correct, that it was under the control of a committee which was answerable to its parent Ministry. The proposed new Committee would, however, report regularly to the RECC, and the Chairman of that Committee would have a seat on the Literacy Committee, as would all the line Ministries.

It will be recalled that the policy document on literacy had advised that each District should be left to decide whether and when it would participate in the programme. Since the whole enterprise was viewed as a partnership it was essential that Districts should have this right. It was equally essential that once a District had opted for inclusion it should be represented on the national committee and thereby take part in the formulation of policy. Similarly, major national voluntary organisations were also given committee places, since it was essential that they should be encouraged to make their fullest contribution to the work.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education formally established the committee and the Deputy Permanent Secretary was nominated as Chairman. Fortunately no effort was made to shackle the committee with terms of reference. It was simply to be concerned with the launching and management of the National Literacy Programme. Where it was necessary to refer decisions to higher authority, in the case of Education this would be done by the Chairman, and for the other Ministries by their respective committee member. During the two years I was associated with the committtee there were no constitutional wrangles; everybody knew what it was doing without any unnecessary bye-laws formulating its duties. The arrangement worked well.

I was Secretary to the committee, and officers of the Department concerned with the work attended meetings as observers. It met quarterly, a session occupying most of the morning. At each meeting the Secretary gave a report on activities and the representative of the Ministry of Finance on the state of the balance sheet.

The National Literacy Committee met for the first time on 15 January, 1980. As this session it took the following four decisions. First, 'that a national initiative against illiteracy, 1980-86, be inaugurated', 'that the initiative should generally be based on the proposals contained in the Consultation Document', 'that a National Literacy Committee be established to take overall supervision of the initiative, chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Education or his representative, with the Department of Non-formal Education having central executive responsibility for the work' and finally, 'that the National Literacy Committee seeks the patronage of the highest authority for the initiative'. And so what was to be renamed the Botswana National Literacy Programme was officially set in motion.

At District level, the District Extension Team acted as the local co-ordinating committee for the literacy programme. More will be said about this later.

National Consultation

The national meeting held in March 1979 had given the go ahead, but it had been stipulated that an integral part of the preliminaries to be carried out before actually starting work would be consultation on all matters relating to the proposed programme with those most likely to be involved. This was essential since wholehearted support would be forthcoming only from those who had the opportunity of discussing the proposals and sharing in the formulation of the detailed plans. This was particularly necessary in Botswana where consultation leading to concensus has been a feature of tribal life from time immemorial. Whether such lengthy consultation is so necessary in other societies and cultures is a matter for conjecture. A literacy programme must fit into the political, social and cultural mores of a nation.

A consultation document[1] was drawn up by DNFE and approved by the Permanent Secretary. In September it was distributed, in quantity, to Ministries, District Councils, Town Councils, Church representatives, Trade Unions, Voluntary Organisations, industrial undertakings as well as to a number of interested individuals. At the same time all Embassies were given copies, and potential external donors were also kept informed. In all some 2,000 copies of the Document were despatched. District and town authorities, from whom it was imperative to receive replies, were asked to reply by mid-November, that is in two months time. It was left to each District authority to decide its own attitude to the programme; there would be discussion and explanation but no coercion.

In a covering note to Districts it was again emphasised that this was to be a voluntary programme. District and Town authorities had the right to say 'no'; where the response was to be positive, they also had the option of

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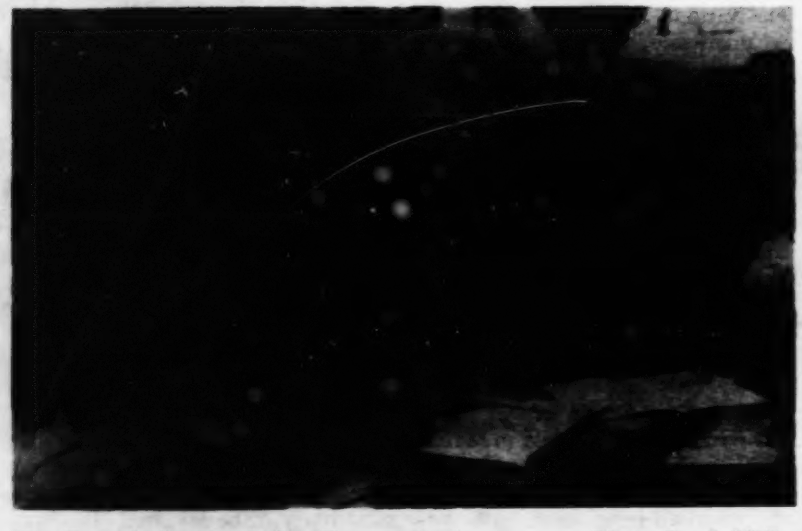
[1] The eradication of illiteracy in Botswana. A national initiative; consultation document. Ministry of Education, September 1979.



Non-Formal education is for all age groups! *Photo: Dr. J. Müller*

Personal guidance: the secret of success in adult education.

Photo: Dr. J. Müller

Two Literacy Assistants (LAs) discuss problems at the monthly meeting.

Photo: Dr. J. Müller.

Reading aloud for each other: Learner and Literacy Group Leader.

Photo: Dr. J. Müller.

indicating when they would wish to enter the programme, in 1980, 1981 or later.

Botswana had experienced two poor wet seasons and it was known that some local authorities were very preoccupied with drought relief schemes. It seemed unlikely that from these there would be staff and other resources available to come into the programme immediately, and this was in fact the case.

A co-operative effort

The Consultation Document described the nature of the programme being envisaged. Its aim 'to enable 250,000 presently illiterate men, women and youths to become literate in Setswana and numerate during the six years, 1980 to 1985'. It suggests that 'the teaching shall be undertaken in the context of development issues of relevance to the participants and concern to the respective Districts and the nation'. 'The term literate shall be interpreted to imply that a person can comprehend those written communications and simple computations which are a part of daily life'.

The approach was to be a co-operative effort between central and local government. Central government, that is DNFE, should be the supplier of materials, the trainer of personnel and the initiator of research and evaluation. Each District (and Town Council) shall be free to determine whether, when and in what measure and to what extent it wishes to participate. The only stipulations made on those Districts which participate being that they allocate sufficient resources, human and material, for the work to be effective and that they remain in the programme for a minimum of three years. Thus an obligation was placed squarely on a participating District; DNFE will provide support, but there must be complementary actions which will involve some expenditure, and there must be agreement to remain in the programme for enough time for results to be visible. In effect, Districts cannot come in and go out of the programme as they pleased.

At this early stage it was thought that much of the work in the Districts would be carried out by existing local extension cadres under the supervision of the District Extension Team. In particular, efforts were made to encourage the Community Development Department to espouse literacy as one of their principal tasks. This proposition was turned down on the grounds that it already had sufficient to do dealing with social welfare and youth work. It had been this hope that a literacy programme could be established without setting up a new and separate cadre of extension workers that had prompted the inclusion in the Consultation Document of the aim that 'the initiative should work in with existing administrative structures, and that personnel at present engaged in some form of community work should be used wherever practicable'. Though the existing administrative committee structure was used, that is the District and Village Extension Teams, a new cadre of extension workers had to be established. As a consequence, local authorities did not have to make the financial contribution to the programme which was originally envisaged, since the new full-time staff would be paid from DNFE. Their goodwill and moral support, however, were essential. Indeed, the commitment of Chiefs and Headmen to the programme usually proved to be of crucial importance. The greatest care was taken to ensure that local dignitaries were given prior notice before DNFE staff came to an area, and literacy staff were always introduced to Chiefs and Headmen.

The Consultation Document then proceeds to describe the organisation envisaged, and the duties of central and local government are explained. A District or Town Council may opt to enter the programme in 1980, 1981 or 1982, but before doing so it must give notice of its intention in the December preceeding. This was to give time for the necessary preparations, including group leader training, to be made. Once a District had indicated its willingness to join in, it was required to establish a local literacy committee or to instruct the District Extension Team to act in this capacity. In the event it was always the DET which took on this additional responsibility, thus obviating the necessity of setting up a new administrative device. Furthermore this had the great benefit of immediately involving all the extension agencies in the literacy programme, a highly desirable situation. It must be emphasised that it was absolutely vital to set up an alert supervising body in each District. Local plans can only be made by local people; their involvement in planning District strategy was crucial to the success of the programme, and in subsequent years it became quite clear that where the DET was active and keen the programme flourished; where this support was lacking the work suffered.

The Consultation Document then sought to give a sketch as to how the programme would be organised. It referred to the importance not only of producing teaching material of relevance to the learners but also of a teaching method which was sufficiently straightforward to be comprehended by the literacy group leaders whose ability to master pedagogical skills was limited.

The yearly rhythm was then described. In rural Botswana, part of the year is lived in settled permanent villages. This is the period after harvest and before the next rains, usually from August to November. This, so to speak, is the slack time, when it would be possible to bring people together for group learning. It was essential, therefore, to make maximum use of this period, since 16 to 18 weeks is a very short time in which to transmit sufficient for the learners to be able to continue independently with their studies. In late November the rains commence and there is a move to the lands, a journey which can be as much as 30 to 40 kilometres.

Once at the lands people stay there, being fully occupied with preparing the soil for sowing and then tending the crops, culminating in the harvest which is gathered in April to July, depending on when the rains ended. It was clearly important that this rhythm of events should dictate the annual time-table for the literacy programme as applied to the rural agricultural areas, a lesson which those responsible for literacy programmes throughout the world have to bear in mind. Unless designers of literacy and other similar activities are sensitive to the life style of the potential learners, their efforts are bound to be disregarded. The provision of the daily staple food is always a first priority.

Finally the Consultation Document gave an indication of the order of finance required for the programme. Following this consultation year there would be an experimental year in which participation would be limited to a maximum of 15,000 participants. Thereafter in full teaching years there would be a ceiling of 50,000 learners each year, it being left to the National Literacy Committee to determine the allocation of numbers to Districts, should this become necessary. For the period 1979 to 1986, a total expenditure on materials and capital plant of 1½ million Pula[1] was envisaged. In the same period, 3½ million Pula on recurrent expenditure was needed. The project as a whole thus required some 5 million Pula, or 20 Pula for each participant learner. These figures were based on the assumption that a participant would remain in the programme for two years. The first year would embrace study of the literacy primers in groups and later individually. The second year would be one of continuing association with the programme, though not in groups. The monthly Broadsheet, to be described later, would be available and it was hoped that other extension agencies would carry on with training opportunities in applied skills. It was not envisaged that DNFE would, of itself, offer income generating training, other than literacy and numeracy. The department had neither the capacity nor the expertise to do this. It is a fatal error for departments of NFE to imagine they can do everything!

The document was sent to all parties likely to be involved. Consultation, however, implies more than simply posting papers and expecting people to read, mark and respond. Throughout September and October members of DNFE travelled the country, meeting Chiefs and Headmen, District and Town Council officials, and others, discussing the programme, clarifying misconceptions and dealing with the many questions which, no matter how carefully worded, a document can never hope to answer. It was these face-to-face encounters which ensured that the programme was fully understood, and which helped to arouse national interest in, and commitment for, an all-out effort to create a literate nation. By November, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education was receiving the replies from Districts. All nine wished to participate; five would join immediately and the other four in 1981. The Botswana National Literacy Programme had gained acceptance.

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[1] At that time 1.6 Pula approximated to £1 sterling.

Teaching Materials

The third task which had to be initiated in the closing months of 1979 was to commence designing the materials which would be used. There were perhaps no more than two people in Botswana with any practical experience of literacy work, and it was therefore a matter of gathering together a team who together would have to discover the skills involved. Fortunately there were new members of DNFE who were committed to the programme and willing to learn. There was some material from the pilot project which could be used, but this had to be very considerably revised.

The teaching method adopted consisted of taking a key-word, chosen both for its likely interest to the learners and because it contained those syllables which had to be mastered. The key-word would first be discussed, using a picture as a guide, and consequently the sounds of syllables it contained would be heard. There would then be a transference from sound to sight, with various exercises being employed to reinforce the material being learnt. Writing and numeracy exercises would be included. The system adopted is explained in Appendix 2. At this early stage not all the material which eventually was needed could be designed. Main attention had to be given to the primers and to ensuring that a teaching method was being developed which was appropriate. By early January 1980 a prototype Primer One was ready for testing on two groups of learners resident near the DNFE Headquarters.

Research

The fourth preliminary task which the policy group had recommended should be initiated immediately was basic research. The University was unable to assist, and DNFE staff were fully committeed to the other work in hand. Field Officers were involved in holding District consultations; the one literacy officer at headquarters was enagaged in designing materials.

It would, of course, have been gratifying to have had validated material on which to base our actions. There was a little evidence available from the earlier literacy project but it has to be admitted that in many aspects there was boundless ignorance! Had there been answers to some of the questions, we would have been able to plan the programme with added confidence. Hunches pointed to certain conclusions, but there was no guarantee that these were correct. And DNFE had to listen to a handful of critics who cautioned against doing anything until more information was available. There are always those who prefer to hesitate than take bold action.

In the event it was decided to go ahead. 1980 was designated an experimental year and much would be learned then. Furthermore, literacy programmes are not exactly novel experiences. There are few aspects of NFE better documented, though so much of the literature comes from theoretical academics who appear to be unaware of the snags and pitfalls which are encountered in real life. In retrospect the programme appeared not to have suffered by the decision to press on. Perhaps it alerted staff to be all the more vigilent in formative evaluation.

The search for Donors

The fifth vital task which had to be initiated immediately was the search for external funds to pay for most, if not all, of the enterprise. Although the programme was included in the National Development Plan, there was a moral obligation to try to attract new money to pay for it. This was work for the planning officers in the Ministries of Education and Finance. A first priority was to put together a memorandum outlining the programme, supported by a draft budget. Much of this had already been done in the Consultation Document, though it was essential to re-phase and often re-shape it so that it was oriented towards the known interests of the particular donor.

The hardest donor to find for any project is invariably the first one. Who is willing to give money to a proposal which has no other backers? And with an operation such as literacy, which has aroused a good deal of suspicion due to the lack of success of efforts in so many countries, the task of persuading an initial donor to show their support is often all the harder. Fortunately, the worst fears were not realised, and within a month or so of the programme being adopted the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) indicated that it would be willing, subject to the consent of the Botswana Government, to allow funds it already had donated to be used for this purpose. The first big hurdle had been surmounted; a second donor soon emerged. This was the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany. In fact the very first hard cash to be available was from the GTZ; a small but useful grant for commodity aid was made to enable initial materials to be purchased. During the early part of 1980 two other organisations joined the consortium of donors; one was the Netherlands Government and the other UNICEF. These four together provided all the money needed for the first two years, with the promise that if the programme lived up to expectations more would follow.

Thus it was that 1979, the year of consultation, closed on a high note. DNFE had moved into its new premises; the literacy programme had been formally adopted as a major thrust in community NFE; the initial tasks were well in hand; the scene was set for action.

1980, the Experimental Year

The Plan

Before outlining the events of 1980 the overall plan will be described.

The annual time-table was framed to meet the special requirements of those people, the vast majority, who move their habitation between the settled, nucleated, villages and the dispersed agricultural land areas. Learners in urban areas, and those who remain living in the villages throughout the year, could be catered for much more easily and virtually without interruption. The important thing was to establish a modus operandi for the transients. To this end the allocation of times and duties as shown in Table 2, was made.

The field staff being specifically recruited for the literacy programme were full-time Literacy Assistants (LAs) and part-time Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs). The oveall supervision of the District programme was entrusted to

Month	Climate	Location of People	Literary activities 1) In the Field	2) By Headquarters
Dec.	Wet	Lands	a) Assistance to learners at the lands.	Revising material and having it printed.
Jan.	Wet	Lands	b) Re-training of local staff.	Throughout the year: Publication of Monthly Boradsheet and weekly Radio Broadcast.
Feb.	Wet	Lands		
March	Wet	Lands	c) Stock-piling materials	Distributing material to districts. Literacy Assistants training
April	Dry	Lands	DET deciding on strategy. Public Relations in new areas.	
May	Dry	Lands	Recruitment and training of part-time staff.	
June	Dry	Lands		
July	Dry	Village	Learning Groups formed and continue to November/ December.	District visiting (to November)
Aug.	Dry	Village		
Sept.	Dry	Village		
Nov.	Dry/Wet	Village/ Lands		Commence re-editing material.
Dec.	Wet	Lands		

Table 2. The Literacy Time-table.

the District Adult Education Officer (DAEO). Districts would be allocated LAs according to their requirements and the size of population being served. The programme had a ceiling of 150 LAs, of whom a maximum of 30 could be recruited in the experimental year.

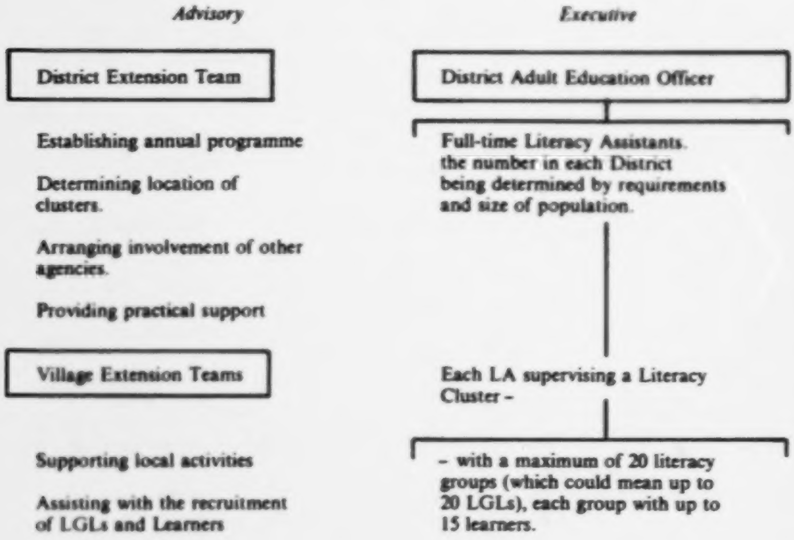
Advisory
Executive
District Extension Team
District Adult Education Officer
Establishing annual programme
Determining location of clusters.
Arranging involvement of other agencies.
Providing practical support
Full-time Literacy Assistants, the number in each District being determined by requirements and size of population.
Village Extension Teams
Each LA supervising a Literacy Cluster –
Supporting local activities
Assisting with the recruitment of LGLs and Learners
– with a maximum of 20 literacy groups (which could mean up to 20 LGLs), each group with up to 15 learners.

Diagram 3. The District Literacy Organisation.

An LAs main work is to supervise the literacy groups. It was laid down by the National Literacy Committee that the maximum number of groups which an LA could supervise is 20, but in areas where the population is widely dispersed this figure would be considerably decreased. The groups supervised by an LA are known as a literacy cluster. A group would consist of no more than 15 learners; if a sixteenth person came along the group would split into two. This was done because a cause of failure in so many literacy programmes is the enormous size of the learning groups, resulting in many of those attending being spectators rather than participants. This situation was to be avoided. A literacy group had to meet a minimum of three times a week, each session being of 1¼ hours. This is about as long as the real interest of the learner can be sustained. Groups which voluntarily opted to go on for a longer time were allowed to do so and in some cases this happened. More often a group would end its formal session at the allotted time and thereafter an informal social gathering would take its place.

Initial testing and re-editing of Primers

The first primers were tested on groups recruited in Gaborone. It was realised that they were not typical of the rural dwellers who would make up the majority of the learners, but this initial testing had to be done close at hand to ease the work of supervision. Defects in the material were reported back to headquarters and an improved first primer was produced in March in readiness for the training of the first batch of LAs.

Participating Districts

Five Districts had opted to join the programme for the experimental year. These were Southern, South-East, Kgatleng, Kweneng and Central, the Districts most readily accessible to Gaborone. In the first three there were already District Adult Education Officers, and in the other two, Kweneng and Central, DAEOs were appointed in August. The Directorate of Personnel had been pressed to make these appointments earlier but unfortunately this was not done. It meant that the two officers concerned had not been able to participate in all the preliminary activities. However, they, and their three colleagues, constituted an admirable team of dedicated people, and the success of that first year owed much to their hard endeavours.

Recruitment of Literacy Assistants

It had been planned that there should be a maximum of 30 LAs in 1980, with a possible enrolment of about 10,000 learners. It was the duty of the Directorate of Personnel to recruit candidates for the full-time jobs. Normal recruitment procedures into the civil service are such that those recruited are immediately offered appointments. It was pointed out that such a procedure would be inappropriate in this case since it was not so much the paper qualification of an LA which was important; vital were aptitude for the work and attitude towards other people, and neither of these could be determined simply by looking through the files and finding candidates with the necessary scholastic grade, in this case Form III (Junior Certificate). To those responsible for recruitment this was revolutionary talk. However, it was essential for the well being of the programme that eventually it was agreed that candidates would be called to attend a training course, and only those found suitable would then be offered appointments.

Because so much had to be accomplished in the early months of 1980, it was not possible to plan to commence the LA training course before April. The Directorate of Personnel was given warning of the necessity of having the recruits ready to be collected together by then; failure to do so would have resulted in a postponement of the programme with a consequent shortening of those vital weeks when group learning could take place. It was also made clear that in the choice of recruits, it was desirable to select people from the Districts in which the programme was to operate.

As April drew closer it became evident that the Directorate would be unable to deal with the recruitment of LAs. The whole programme was thus in jeopardy unless urgent action was taken. After further discussion it was agreed that DNFE should undertake the recruitment, it being stipulated that first priority was to be given to those who had already applied to government for employment. Interviewing Committees were hastily formed in the five Districts and repeated announcements on radio had the desired effect of producing the necessary candidates. Almost miraculously, some 32 young men and women reported to Kanye (the place chosen for the Training Course) on the due date in April. However, there was still one problem to be overcome. The day after the course commenced an official of the Directorate of Personnel informed DNFE that it had no right to have started training without further consultation. It was explained that there had been a few days in which to recruit people and it had been essential to inform the successful candidates immediately otherwise the start of training would have been delayed. This would have had serious consequences for the programme. After some hours of discussion it was accepted that in this instance the course could proceed.

Looking back such incidents seem trivial and hardly deserve to be recalled. It is only worth doing so as a reminder to those theoretical writers on literacy programmes who never have to graple with realities. Who can so readily provide ideal schemes without understanding that in life it is the exception rather than the rule for everything to happen with perfect clockwork precision.

The Training Course

A tight time-table allowed for only three weeks to be allocated to the formal training of the Literacy Assistants. Admittedly this was to be followed by a further period of some five to six weeks when the LAs would continue with training in their Districts, supervised by the District Officers. Nevertheless, the time for preparation was much too short.

With this in mind it was imperative to deal only with essentials and not to overload the programme. People as unused as the trainees were to reading and study of any kind can only assimilate a very limited number of new ideas at a time; there were all kinds of suggestions for putting in peripheral material but apart from sessions which were deliberatey arranged to ease the pressure, particularly in the evenings, it was vital to stick to priorities. And what were they? It must be remembered that the trainees had been virtually plucked off the street. Keenness for a job they had; background knowledge of anything remotely educational consisted of their own school experiences, and these were mostly uncongenial.

Before discussing further the content of the training course, it will be helpful to say something about the trainees, and what would be expected of them. Females outnumbered males by 4 to 1. This was not surprising. Outside observers have often noted how much more alert and keen are the women and girls to young men. Women shoulder most of the burdens of daily life and this has given them a drive and adaptability which is simply not there in their male counterparts. It came as no surprise, therefore, that it would be young women who would undertake most of the hard work in the field. The recruits had to have attained the age of 18 and most were under 22. It would have been preferred to have a slightly older cohort, but the recruiting drive did not seem to have attracted them. All had passed their Junior Certificate (Form III)[1] examination.

The central task of an LA is to supervise a number of Literacy Group Leaders. As time goes on they should also be able to work as local NFE agents, advising people on their continuing education and perhaps also acting as Secretary of Village Extension Teams. It was with this in mind that in 1981 it was proposed to change the title of LAs to the broader one of Extension Educator. However, this is for the future. At this initial course, the trainees had to learn skills. First how to conduct a literacy class and secondly how to supervise the LGLs. There was an introductory day, explaining what the literacy programme was all about, but for the rest of the time the main emphasis was on practice rather than theory. The problems and pitfalls of teaching adults emerged in the practicals and the subsequent discussions; better this way than artifical lectures on do's and dont's. The staff of the course consisted of the Literacy Officer at headquarters, District Adult Education Officers and myself. At the end of the three weeks there was reasonable confidence that 27 trainees could be deployed into the Districts, there to undergo continuing training.

The Literacy Materials

For the 1980 Training Course, the primer used was that which had been tested on the Gaborone pilot groups. However, its most penetrating test of suitability was now to be conducted, for there is no better way of learning about defects in teaching material than using it during training! Looking back that prototype primer was indeed a pretty rough affair. Printed on large A2 and containing 20 sections, it was criticised without mercy. Immediately after the course, the literacy officer and editorial designers at headquaters were able to put on the printing presses a much improved article. 10,000 copies had to be rushed through, and it is to the credit of the printers that the material was ready for despatch by early June.

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[1] Since this book was written there have been changes in the secondary cycle and the Junior Certificate examination is now sat at the completion of Form II.

The principal teaching aid was the flannelgraph, chosen in preference to the blackboard, since writing legibly on a board is a fairly sophisticated art. The early flannelgraphs were covered in white flannel, a hopelessly impractical colour to have chosen, and later models were of a dark material. Syllable and word cards were produced, together with blanks. The cards came in blocks rather like pages of postage stamps. The number of the lesson in which a syllable or word first occurred was printed in a bottom corner. Group Leaders were provided with envelopes and elastic bands to help with keeping the pieces sorted. Teaching inexperienced leaders how to hold the flannelgraph against the chest with one hand whilst affixing cards to it with the other took time and patience. Getting them to have the correct cards ready sorted for a lesson demanded even more attention! Sanding the cards for use on the flannelgraph proved unexpectedly difficult. In a country largely desert, sand is in plentiful supply. It was soon learned, however, that only finely sifted river sand could be used. This still left the problem of sticking the sand on the backs of the cards. The process had to be simple and inexpensive. A fine glue spray was the most effective, but unfortunately the limited stock of containers available in Gaborone was soon exhausted, and fresh supplies might take weeks to arrive. Once again a valuable lesson was to be learned. Whatever material was needed, be it paper, pencils, printer's ink, rubber bands, all had to be ordered months in advance. To do so was the responsibility of the Chief Editor.

The primer was intended to give the learners the ability to read the 80 most frequently used syllables in the Setswana language. As Setswana is spelt phonetically learners would then be able to build up the words in common usage. This was as much as could be accomplished in 16 weeks. The primer contained 20 sections or lessons, every fifth one being for revision when nothing new was taught. Writing and arithmetic were integral parts of the lessons. Along with the primer was printed a leader's guide, showing the group leader the method to be used and drawing attention to particular points in each lesson. Supplementary sheets were also produced on a variety of topics, including games, to reinforce the primer material and guard against boredom which can so easily set in. In 1980 there were few such sheets, but progressively the number available increased. Whether DAEOs were competent to ensure that LAs always had a supply of sheets for distribution to groups is a matter of conjecture. Sadly for some officials the tidy ordering of materials was a task beyond their capacity, which brought home another lesson. Teaching material must be as simple as possible and the number of different items kept within bounds.

bala 1 | bala 1 | ba 1 | la 1 | l 1 | a 1

1 1 | lema 2 | lema 2 | le 2 | ma 2

e 2 | be 2 | me 2 | 2 2 | + 2 | = 2 | mo 3

molemo 3 | molemo 3 | bo 3

mo 3 | o 3 | le 3 | lo 3 | ka 3 | ke 3 | 3 3

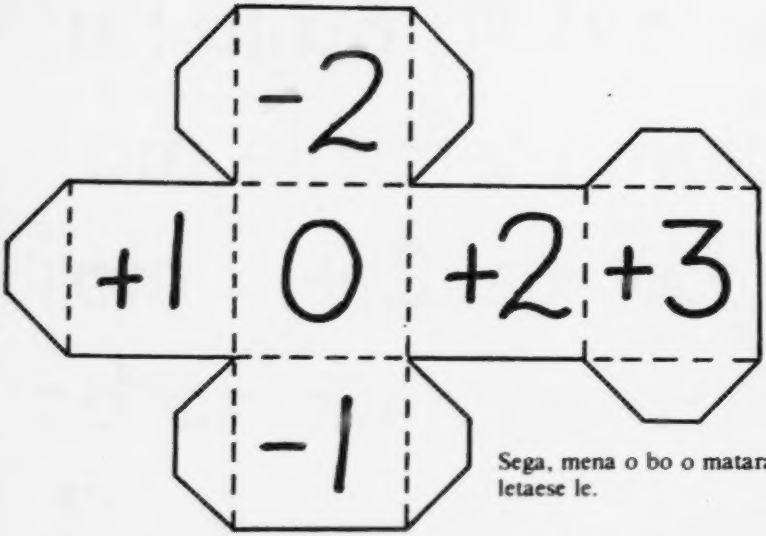
ko 3 | mo 3 | + 3 | madi 4 | madi 4

ma 4 | di 4 | mi 4 | di 4 | bi 4 | ki 4 | li 4 | i 4

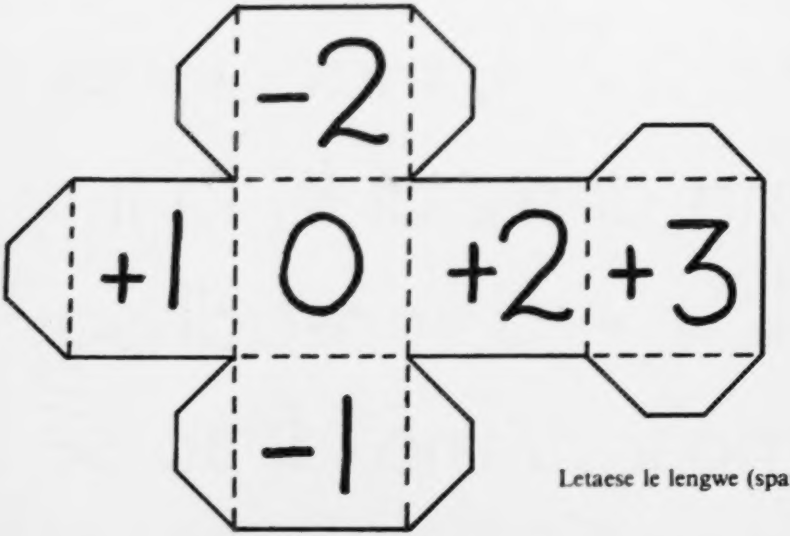
4 4 | + 4 | – 4 | 5 5 | mosadi 6 | sa 6

mosadi | mo 6 | di 6 | so 6 | se 6

Syllable, word and number card for lessons 1 to 6.



Sega, mena o bo o mataraganya letaese le.

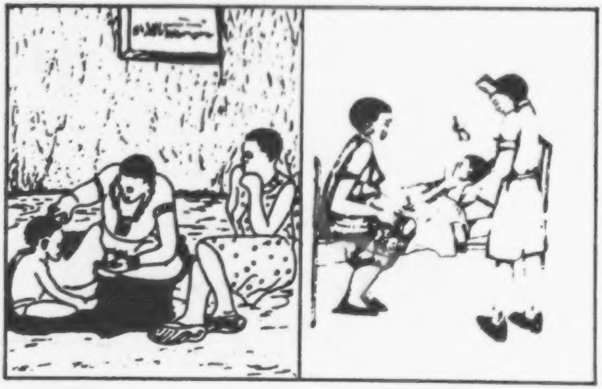


Letaese le lengwe (spare)

Home-made dice for use in number games.

- 6 -

③ molemo



molemo

mo

le

mo

molemo

a	ba	la	ma
e	be	le	me
o	bo	lo	mo

o a bobola

o a bolola

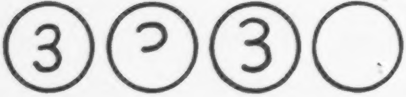
ba aba molemo

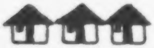
o lebala molemo

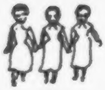
molemo o a bela

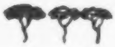
o ba abela molemo

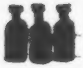
A typical lesson in Primer 1.





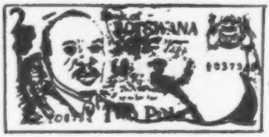




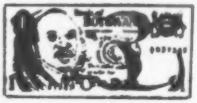


______ ______ ______ ______

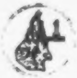
2 + 1 = ______   1 + 1 = ______   1 + 2 = ______


BOTSWANA
TWO PULA

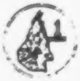
+



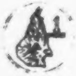
= ______ pula



+



+



= ______ thebe

mo mo mo mo

le le le le

molemo molemo

bobola bobola

o a bobola ______

o ba a bela molemo

③

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

a) Flannelgraph
b) lema, molemo (twice)
c) a, ba, la, ma, e, be, le, me, o, bo, lo, mo
(twice), 1, 2, 3, +, =
d) Primer 1 opened at lesson 3.

SESSION 1

REVISION (5 min)

Revise lema, 1, 2, +, =.

PICTURE (5 min)

Ask them: 'What do you see in the picture?'
'Do you ever visit a traditional doctor?'
'Would you say that traditional and modern medicine are equally good?'
'Do you always follow the doctor's prescriptions?'
'Do you ever take your friend's medicine?'
'Is it advisable to do that?'
'What could happen if you took your friend's medicine?'
'Which diseases do you think modern doctors are not competent to cure?'

SOUND (5 min)

Three sentences
Ba aba molemo.
Molemo o a bela.
O lebala molemo.

LOOKING AT THE KEY WORD (5 min).

Show them the key word in the primer. Mention something about the vowel o.

WORD AND SYLLABLE GAMES (15 min)

Use all syllables learnt to form different words. Volunteers should do this.

SYLLABLE BOX (5 min)

Let them read across the box. Emphasise the o.

The English version of the Teachers' Guide for Lesson 3, Primer 1. The text in the Sebwana version is somewhat fuller.

READING (10 min)

Help them read the sentences and get volunteers to read individually.

NUMBER (5 min)

Show them the number 3 and tell them that they are on lesson 3. Again they should write on top of the lines in the circles until they write 3 in the last one. Ask them how many of each object they see. Each time they answer 3, ask them to write it in the space provided.

Put up the plus and equals signs on the flannelgraph to refresh their memories.

REVISION (5 min)

Let them do word-building.

When. where and what time do we meet next?

SESSION 2

REVISION (5 min)

Revise molemo, 1, 2, 3, +, =

WORD-BUILDING (10 min)

Volunteers should build words.

NUMBER (10 min)

Let them do the arithmetic problems between the pairs of objects and the writing in the lines.

WRITING (15 min)

Help them copy the writing in the lines. Give individual attention.

REVISION (10 min)

Call out the numbers, signs and syllables which individual volunteers should put up on the flannelgraph.

NEXT MEETING?

⑩

bala lema molemo madi
mosadi merogo pula

a	ba		ga	la	ma	pa	ra	sa
e	be		ge	le	me	pe	re	se
i	bi	di	gi		mi	pi	ri	si
o	bo		go	lo	mo	po	ro	so
u	bu	du			mu	pu	ru	su

mopipi
pedi
pudulogo
mopalo
lomapo
papadi
mosamo

more
badisa
bula
balela
bela
mebila
mosadi

moro
morula
moriri
sepalamo
moremi
marapo
bidisa

dumisa
didimala
mogogi
mogodu
sidila
bobisa

mosadi o suga mosese
o sule malobaamaabane
go busa babusi
modisa o gama pudi
re lemolola mariga
semumu ga se bue

A revision lesson in Primer 1.

⑩ ⑩ ⑩ ○

✡✡✡✡ ✡ ____

✡✡ ____

✡✡✡✡ ✡✡✡✡ ____

✡✡✡✡ ✡✡ ____

✡✡✡✡✡ ✡✡✡✡ ____

✡✡✡✡✡ ✡✡✡✡✡ ____

✡✡✡✡ ____

✡ ____

✡✡✡✡ ✡✡✡ ____

✡✡✡ ____

---

10 - 5 + 2 = ____

3 - 3 + ____ = 3

5 + 3 = ____

10 - 3 - 2 = ____

3 + 3 - 3 = ____

6 + 1 + ____ = 10

7 + 2 + 1 = ____

10 - 7 + ____ = 7

10 - 8 + 1 = ____

5 + 3 + ____ = 10

9 - 8 + 7 = ____

9 + 1 = ____

9 + 1 - 5 = ____

magapu a le mararo + a le 5 = ____

diapole di le pedi + di le 8 = ____

basadi ba le 8 + ba le babadi = ____

dipudi di le 9 – di le 4 = ____

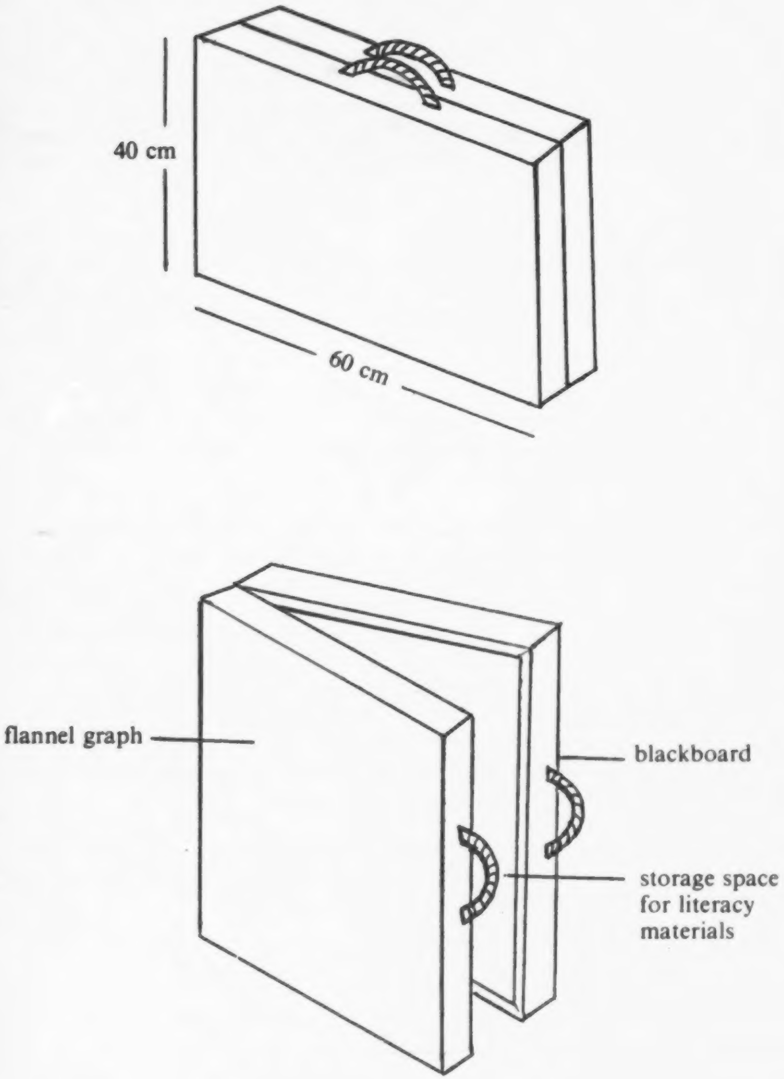

40 cm
60 cm
flannel graph
blackboard
storage space for literacy materials

Illustration of a literacy box.

But the most important additional reading material was the monthly Broadsheet. This two page publication included items of topical news, letters from readers with editorial replies, material written by other extension agencies, a strip cartoon and literacy and numeracy puzzles. LAs were urged to encourage their group leaders to use the Broadsheet during some sessions to change the style of the work. The sheet was distributed in bulk so that extra copies could be left in libraries, hospitals, prisons, shops, churches; indeed anywhere frequented by the public, for its value went far beyond those participating in the literacy programme. By using a sheet format it could easily be put up on notice boards. The initial print run in 1980 was 15,000 copies, and even at that number the task of bundling up and addressing the sheets had to be given to additional temporary assistants, a task which became more arduous in the following year when 50,000 copies were being printed monthly.

Other extension agencies were encouraged to distribute their materials through the literacy network. Exhortations to simplify the language used were largely neglected, and the government daily paper unfortunately had no space for a new literates column.

In addition to the teaching material, there also had to be some administrative forms. It was the intention to keep these to a minimum and make them as simple as possible. There was a Group Form listing names, sex, address and lands area of the participants and a consolidated list of groups being supervised by each LA giving names of LGLs and location of groups. There was also a monthly sheet on which a group leader had to record the dates of sessions and attendance of participants. This was Form L.1., used at the end of each month for assessing the honorarium for the LGL. An LA monthly report form was available as was also a form used occasionally for completion by LAs after selected group visits. A complete list of the materials available in 1980 is given in Appendix 3.

A cardboard folder was produced in which the leader could keep the group's materials. This was quickly found to be far too flimsy, and from 1981 a wooden box was provided instead.

DEPARTMENT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

LOCATION OF LITERACY GROUPS

DISTRICT ____________ DATE OF COMPLETION OF FORM ________

NAME OF LA ______________________

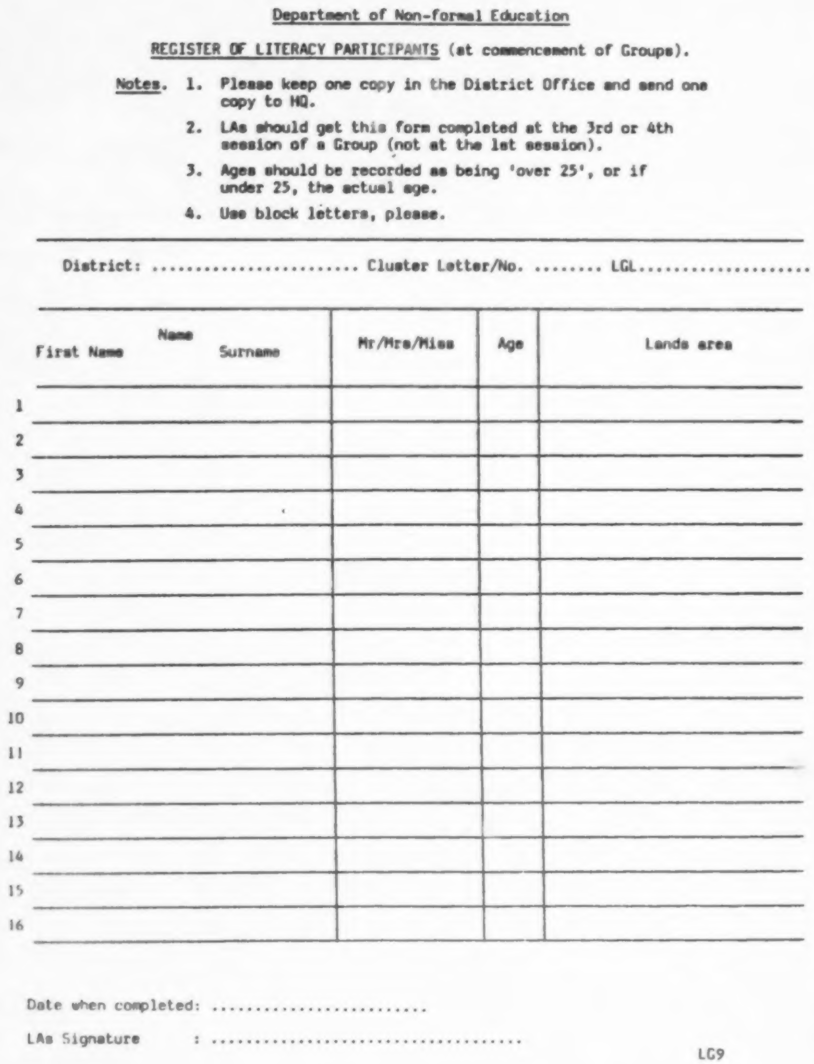
CLUSTER LETTER _____ CENTRAL LOCATION OF CLUSTER ____________

____

Group No.	Location	LGL	No. of members	
			M	F

LG 6

Location of Groups in a literacy cluster to be completed by the Literacy Assistant.



Department of Non-formal Education

REGISTER OF LITERACY PARTICIPANTS (at commencement of Groups).

Notes.
1. Please keep one copy in the District Office and send one copy to HQ.
2. LAs should get this form completed at the 3rd or 4th session of a Group (not at the 1st session).
3. Ages should be recorded as being 'over 25', or if under 25, the actual age.
4. Use block letters, please.

District: .... Cluster Letter/No. .... LGL....................

	Name		Mr/Mrs/Miss	Age	Lands area
	First Name	Surname			
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					

Date when completed: ....

LAs Signature : ....

LG9

Register of members in a literacy group.

Group No. _____ Location ____________________ Literacy Group Leader's Name ____________________

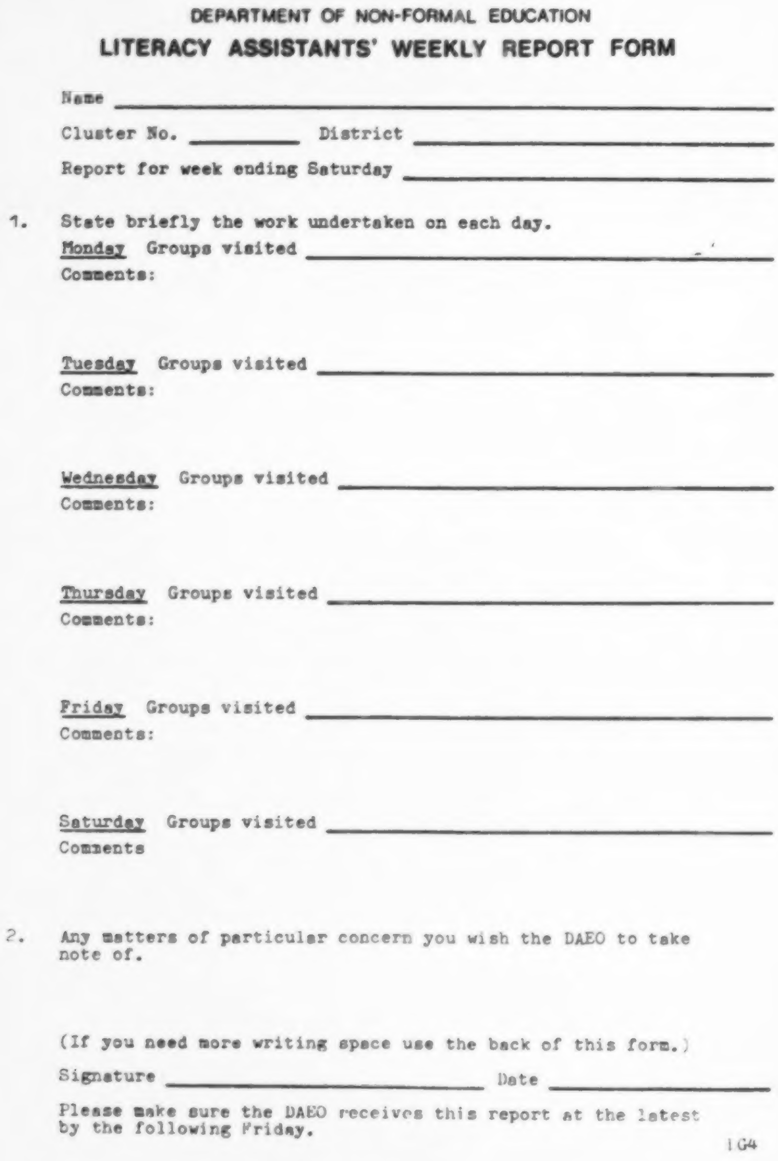
NAMES DATES Month ______________ Year ______________

I certify that I have taught .... lessons during the month of ....

Signed (LGL) .... Signed (LA) .... Date ....

L/1

The monthly register to be completed at each meeting by the Literacy Group Leader.



DEPARTMENT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

LITERACY ASSISTANTS' WEEKLY REPORT FORM

Name ______________________________

Cluster No. ________ District ______________________

Report for week ending Saturday ______________________

1. State briefly the work undertaken on each day.

Monday Groups visited ______________________

Comments:

Tuesday Groups visited ______________________

Comments:

Wednesday Groups visited ______________________

Comments:

Thursday Groups visited ______________________

Comments:

Friday Groups visited ______________________

Comments:

Saturday Groups visited ______________________

Comments

2. Any matters of particular concern you wish the DAEO to take note of.

(If you need more writing space use the back of this form.)

Signature ______________________ Date ______________

Please make sure the DAEO receives this report at the latest by the following Friday.

1G4

LAs Weekly Report Form.

DEPARTMENT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

GROUP REPORT FORM

Name of LA ____________________ District ____________

1. Group visits

Name of LGL ____________________ Group No. ____________

Date of visit ____________ Time of visit ____________

Duration of visit ____________

2. Details of Group

Number on register ________ Number present ________

Comments on those absent ______________________________

____

Meeting place ______________________________

Lesson being taught ____________ Session ____________

3. Comments (Put a ring round the appropriate answer.)

a. Meeting Place:	Lighting	good/satisfactory/poor
	Seating	good/satisfactory/poor
	Ventilation	good/satisfactory/poor
	Location	good/satisfactory/poor
	Space	good/satisfactory/poor
b. Teaching (as applicable)		
	Discussion of picture	good/satisfactory/poor
	Teaching of key-word	good/satisfactory/poor
	Teaching of syllable box	good/satisfactory/poor
	Teaching of reading	good/satisfactory/poor
	Teaching of number	good/satisfactory/poor
	Teaching of writing	good/satisfactory/poor
	Use of teaching aids	good/satisfactory/poor
c. General approach of leader		good/satisfactory/poor
d. Participation of students		good/satisfactory/poor
e. Overall impression of the session		good/satisfactory/poor

At the end of the session, please go through these comments with the LGL.
Matters over which you are critical should be fully discussed with the LGL.

Signature of LGL ____________ Signature of LA ____________

LG2

Report on a Group visit by the Literacy Assistant.

Into the Districts

The centre of activity now moved to the Districts. Whilst editors, printers, collators and despatchers were feverishly working long hours to get the material out to the Districts, the District officers were equally busily engaged in the delicate task of finalising local strategy. A document giving Guidelines for District Strategy[1] had been circulated for discussion by District Extension Teams (DET), giving guidance to the LA selection committees. The document addressed itself to the manner in which the literacy programme was to be conducted. It stressed that there should be no coercion on people to join classes; this was to be the voluntary decision taken by each individual. It then went on to describe the plan of action to be adopted in each District.

Each District would be allocated 5 or 6 LAs. In the event some trainees from Central District were found not to be of the desired standard and only two LAs were deployed there. The DAEO and the DET must determine how the staff was to be distributed in the District. Since an LA had to supervise a cluster of up to 20 groups, it stood to reason that even if equipped with a motor cycle the places to be visited must be reasonably close, if 4 or 5 groups are to be seen each day. The advice to Districts was thus to select cluster areas after considering the size and distribution of the population, their accessibility for supervision and the availability of part-time group leaders. Since this was the experimental year there would be value in choosing cluster sites in differing environments, that is some in large villages and others in more rural surroundings. Before finally deciding on a cluster site the DAEO should make a detailed survey of the area and ensure that the goodwill of local dignitaries would be forthcoming.

The choice of cluster areas had been commenced in March and continued until May. At that time the LAs arrived at District headquarters. A number of actions then had to be taken simultaneously. There was the establishment of the District office and the sorting of material. LA training had to be continued including the making of additional teaching aids such as clock faces, letter games and dice. Then one at a time the LAs had to be taken to their cluster area and presented to Headmen and people. Kgotla meetings[2] had to be addressed and questions answered. It was of the utmost importance that the communities being served should have participated in deciding whether, when and how the programme was to proceed. This may take a long time but to short cut this procedure could have been fatal. Once a community was satisfied about the scheme it would be asked to help find accommodation for the LA and begin to recruit the part-time group leaders.

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[1] Guidelines for District Literacy Strategy. Ministry of Education, March 1980.

[2] The Kgotla acts as a court, local parliament and as a forum for discussion. It is the traditional seat of democracy.

The guidelines document had this to say about the Literacy Group Leaders (LGL), 'It must be remembered that these people are not being asked to take on a salaried appointment but rather a part-time act of service to the community, for which a small token honorarium is paid'. (The National Literacy Committee had debated this matter and decided on a fee of one Pula for a session of 1¼ hours duration). The paper continued, 'In choosing LGLs, Districts should consider the following points. A warm understanding character is to be preferred. LGLs should, if possible, be over 25 years of age. They should be of the community for which they would be working and their character should be such that they are held in respect by their peers'. (In most communities it was regarded as a privilege to have been selected for the work). 'The person must be literate. This probably means one who has attended Primary School though not necessarily having passed the Primary School Leaving Examination. People with higher qualifications were also acceptable. Both men and women are needed, and all must be available to teach up to 40 weeks in a year. They should live in a cluster area and be willing to devote one Saturday morning each month for refresher training'. In 1980 it was stated that an LGL could take two groups but this was later increased to three. It could mean that an LGL would be earning Pula 12 a week which for rural dwellers constituted a valuable augmentation of their resources.

The document adds that it is hoped that group work will continue for as long a time as possible. In many cases this would be for 16 or so weeks before the rains; elsewhere a longer period was possible which is why 'up to 40 weeks' was cited in the guidelines. Furthermore in some lands areas it was possible to form new groups.

Three primers were to be produced. The first was that used in the training course and depended on group instruction. The two following could be used by groups or for individual self-instruction. The primers were marked P.1., P.2., and P.3. Though distributed without charge, the markings were misunderstood to imply that they cost one, two and three Pula each. This enhanced the prestige attached to being the possessor of these books!

Group Leader Training

If teaching was to commence at the beginning of August, the part-time LGLs had to be trained in July. Each District was left to organise this work in the most convenient manner, the only provison being that a course should last at least two working weeks. The DAEO and LAs were to provide the training. Some Districts brought all their LGLs together; others held sub-District courses. The content in all was severely practical, showing the LGLs how to use the teaching material and how to undertake group work. They also had to learn the simple administrative chores involved.

At the conclusion of a training course, the LGL would return to the community and collect together those learners who had volunteered to learn.

The LGL had all the materials needed and once the LA had registered the group, learning could commence.

It was just at the moment in early July when LGL training was to commence that the nation was numbed into a state of shock; the beloved President, founder of the State, was seriously ill. As the days passed it became evident that the news was becoming progressively worse, and on a doleful Sunday morning Sir Seretse Khama died. All activity came to a standstill. Inevitably this meant that the plans for LGL training had to be re-cast and group learning could not start until the middle of August at the earliest.

Horsepower?

It was essential that LAs should be provided with some form of transport. To equip each with a vehicle and driver was out of the question and other alternatives had to be explored. For those working in the larger communities push bicycles were the obvious answer, though even so the sandy tracts made cycling quite strenuous exercise. For those with bigger clusters there were two possibilities, namely horses and motor cycles. The Ministry of Agriculture had tried to introduce horses for their extension workers but the experiment had not worked well. Animals were often over-worked and under-fed, in part no doubt because in remote areas foodstuffs and water are in short supply. The advice was only to use horses or mules actually owned by the LAs and to pay the government allowance of 60 Pula a month, a ridiculously small figure on which to maintain a beast of burden. Sadly, the attitude of government appeared to be that horses were an old-fashioned mode of transport; modern life demanded the highly fallible petrol engine, with all its attendant problems. So horses were out and motor cycles were in, however inappropriate they are for use in deep sand such as much of the Kalahari.

Motor cycles were delivered to DNFE in April. The problem was to persuade the police to provide the statutory four week training course before it was intended to commence group work; a hope not fulfilled, and 12 LAs had to be withdrawn from the field in the critical month of September. It was quite an occasion when they finally reported to headquarters to be fitted out with crash helmets, dungarees, gloves, and for the girls, 'sensible' shoes!

Arrangements also had to be made for the cycles to be supplied with fuel. Government fuel depots are in the main centres, and there can be over 100 kilometres separating them. DNFE cyclists were to work in the deep remote areas, far from such supply points. It would take a full tank of petrol just to travel to and from the filling station. Clearly this was impracticable. And so lengthy negotiations had to be undertaken to obtain permission for 40 gallon petrol drums to be kept by the LAs near their place of residence in the cluster area. Understandably this raised problems. Fuel is a dangerous commodity; it is also saleable. Where possible, fuel drums were kept in police compounds or in stores attached to schools and other public buildings. But first the drums had to be ordered and distributed, and then the task of periodical replenishing added a further burden to the already heavily committed DAEOs.

Special Equipment

In addition to petrol drums, there were other items of equipment which had to be ordered and distributed. Journeys in Botswana usually involved long stretches over bumpy earth, or more accurately sand covered tracks. To get to Tsabong, for example, one has over 200 kilometres of such conditions, and to Ghanzi 300 kilometres or more. Any supplies must be well packed for the journey, otherwise they will be seriously damaged. Metal trunks were purchased for the distribution of printed material both between headquarters and the Districts, and from District offices to cluster areas. There was then the problem of distribution within the clusters, and for this purpose LAs were equipped with back-packs.

Most groups met during the daytime, but there were increasing demands, especially from men, for meetings to be held in the evenings, after work. This necessitated the distribution of pressure lamps and cylinders, a commodity which quickly became virtually unobtainable in Gaborone!

Finally, to give both the LAs and LGLs a distinctive mark they were issued with armbands with the DNFE logo; the former in blue, the latter in red. The LAs were also given an unoffical identity card, containing their photograph, which they could use when asking for a lift or some other form of assistance.

The learners

The professionals were mobilised and there was no shortage of applicants to fill the role of LGL. But what of the learners, the people for whom the whole exercise had been established?

When the LAs were being presented to the Headmen and their communities, the purpose of the programme was explained and discussed. It was then made clear that the programme was for those who cannot read and write but who wished to learn to do so. People would not be pre-tested but only those who had been denied most of their primary schooling would find the work of interest. The response was immediate and in some places overwhelming. In no cluster was there a serious dearth of applicants, and in many cases not all who volunteered could be accepted, for one eye had to be kept on the budget and another on the need for keeping groups no larger than 15. There had to be a limit even if the initial plan allowed for groups to split. In most places the community would decide who should learn. Every endeavour was made to encourage men to register; eventually females outnumbered males by 5 or 6 to 1. Unlike the situation experienced in some notably Muslim countries there appeared to be no difficulty in mixing men and women in the same group, nor young with old. Indeed in most areas a proportion of the learners were youngsters who had not entered primary school or who had dropped out after a year or so.

As the group teaching progressed there began to be requests for a literacy certificate to be awarded. This is not a new problem; most literacy programmes have had to face the same issue. The National Literacy Committee considered the matter. It was clearly important for the learners to know how they are getting on, and this was being done by informal tests at every 5th lesson which was a time for revision. But after giving lengthy thought to the matter, the committee decided against awarding anything other than a certificate of attendance, and that only to those who had attended the course regularly through to the time of dispersal to the lands. This decision did not satisfy all but bearing in mind the many other problems which had to be tackled at this time it was prudent to leave over for the time being whether or not some form of official testing be established. Whilst success in a test can be a source of encouragement, failure can snuff out interest and lead to jealousies and friction.

Table 3 gives the figures for the learners in the 1980 experimental year. The target of 10,000 was not reached, but this was not due to lack of public interest. The postponement of the start had its effects and also there was not the full complement of LAs and consequently also of groups. Of those who registered, only 5% dropped out completely from the groups. A remarkably good attendance record, much credit for it going to the LAs who supervised their LGLs with great conscientiousness and understanding.

Table 3. Literacy staff and participants in the official National Literacy Programme.

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Participants	7976	23,630	18,779	27,935	32,941	40,649
Groups	688	1,779	NA	2,050	2,939	3,000*
Literacy Assts.	28	105	104	135	148	136
Literacy Group Leaders	400*	1,427	1,188	1,599	1,600	1,706

* approximately
NA – not available

The Monthly Meeting

LGLs could only assimilate so much at the initial training course, the emphasis having been on how to handle a group and how to put over the first five or six sessions. The LA would, of course, offer advice to the LGL whenever a group was being visited. At the same time it was felt to be essential that the LGLs in a cluster should be called together by the LA once a month for a Saturday morning refresher at which problems – social as well as pedagogical – could be discussed. A not infrequent topic was that of drunkenness, particularly amongst male participants, and also persistant late arrivals at sessions. In both cases the LGL was advised to leave dealing with these matters to the group as a whole. If their study was being disturbed, it was best for the members to deal with the offenders rather than the LGL taking on the role of police officer.

Financial Arrangements

The monthly rhythm had to revolve around making payment to the LGLs for the sessions they had conducted. Not unnaturally they wanted their dues regularly and in cash. Cheques are not much good if you live 100 kilometres or more from a bank! But it was strictly against government regulations for an officer as junior as an LA to handle public money, and it was physically impossible for the DAEO to pay out the LGLs in the District.

Fortunately the Accountant-General showed great understanding in the matter and though initially the system which was approved seemed complicated, the LAs soon understood it. LAs were given special permission to be registered as paying officers. However, the money transaction had to be handled expeditiously. To this end the following monthly time-table was agreed upon.[1] The pay-month for LGLs would commence on the 15th and end on the following 14th. Immediately after the end of the pay month the DAEO would visit LAs and assist them in filling up their pay sheets. An LGL had a form L.1 for each group and this form showed how many sessions had been conducted in that pay month. On the Wednesday following the 22nd of the month, the LAs would report to the District Office, bringing with them their pay sheets and the supporting form L.1. The LAs would have their pay sheet checked and they would then go to the Government Revenue Office and collect the money. The DAEO would also conduct a refresher seminar for the LAs at this time. LAs were issued with lockable money boxes. They would then return to their clusters and on that Saturday, at the monthly meeting, pay out the LGLs. Signed pay sheets would then be sent to the DAEO who would take them to the Revenue Office.

This all sounds very long winded but it was the only way in which the LGLs could get paid in cash each month without infringing government regulations. Handling money is a temptation. Sadly, one LA embezzled funds and had to be given immediate notice.

The move to the Lands

By early December only groups in the big villages and modern towns were continuing to meet; the migration to the Lands had taken place. Before a group dispersed LAs sought to find out where the members were going and each person was given a follow-up primer. Some were sufficiently confident to be able to study by themselves; others found sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, able to be of assistance.

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[1] Literacy; administrative arrangements 1981. Ministry of Education, June 1981.

LAs made such periodic visits to the Lands as they could, though in the wet season this was often difficult and dangerous. They would carry with them copies of the Broadsheet, and give encouragement and help to those who were continuing to study.

There is no doubt that this annual migration makes it very difficult to sustain motivation. It was therefore pleasing that many in the 1980 cohort wanted to join the groups being formed in 1981, though not of course having to start from scratch again.

Liaison with other agencies

What might be termed the official programme was to be complemented by work undertaken by other agencies. Indeed, from the outset, government agencies, voluntary organisations, churches, political parties and commercial concerns were being encouraged to initiate their own literacy activities. DNFE would provide any bona fide organisation with materials without charge, and short training seminars were organised for those wishing to participate in the work.

An early interest in the literacy programme was shown by the Prisons Department, and it was not long before groups were being established in every prison in the country. The Botswana Council for Women, the YWCA, mining companies, some churches and others followed their example, and soon the 'unofficial' programme was assuming quite considerable proportions. This was all to the good. The aim was to create a wholly literate Botswana. The more people who could be involved in working towards this goal the better. There should be nothing exclusive about a national literacy programme!

The Year comes to an end

1980 was drawing to a close. By December there was time to pause and reflect on what had been achieved and what changes had to be made in preparation for 1981, the first year of full operation. A conference was called at headquarter for DAEOs, LAs, and some LGLs *and learners*, the last named being particularly important. Discussions took place over three days when every aspect of the programme was examined. The primers were scrutinised and amendments proposed. The whole organisation was dissected and piece by piece put together again. The mistakes and misjudgements of 1980 were noted and hopefully would not be repeated.

In particular the primers were subjected to close scrutiny. It was decided to change the rather clumsy format on A4 size and to produce pocket size booklets, more easily managed by the learners. The two teaching primers would be split and re-published as five, each with about ten lessons. This meant the learners would complete a book more quickly, thereby giving them a greater sense of achievement. By January the new series of primers were ready for the editors. This work had to be rushed through to get the raw material to the Government Printer in time for running off 50,000 copies. The size of the order was now too great for the DNFE presses to handle.

Was it successful?

The DAEO of the South-East District happened one day to go into the post office in Ramotswa. An elderly lady came up and grasped hold of him with delight in her eyes. She had a letter from a relative in one hand. Triumphantly she said for all to hear "Now I can read it myself". To those working in the programme this was the positive answer to the question.

Whether the programme had been successful overall was often asked, even if it was impossible to give a verified answer. The low drop-out rate and the increasing number of letters being sent in by new literates for publication in the Broadsheet indicated widespread interest. Whereas a year earlier it had been thought it would be necessary to sell the programme in the Districts, now it was a matter of having to try to keep up with the demands being made on DNFE. In parliament, Members were asking the Minister when the programme would start in their constituencies. District officials were being harrassed by local people wanting to have the opportunity of learning. Chiefs were keen to welcome DNFE officers for talks. At least the idea was catching on. The Botswana National Literacy Programme was at the point of going national.

1981, the first year of full operation.

From experimental to nationwide

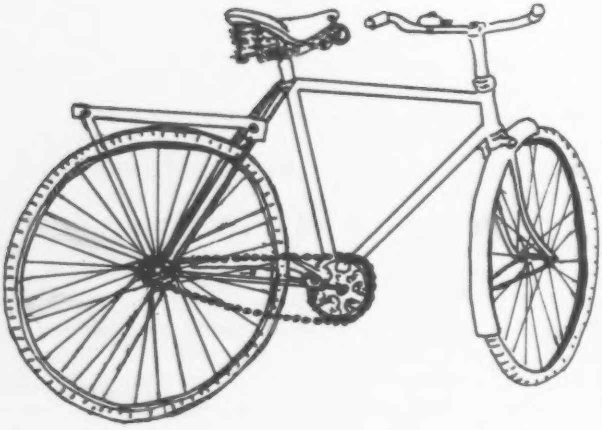
1981 opened auspiciously. The field staff had performed their duties effectively and reports from the five participating Districts indicated that the learners were enthusiastic. Many groups were continuing, and new ones were actually being formed at the lands areas. These were made up of people drawn from a number of learning groups who now found themselves living near each other. Requests were also being received from DETs in the four other Districts for information as to how to set about initiating their own activities. There was no doubt that the programme had the support of the people for whom it was intended.

The big problem was the transference of the programme from being geographically confined and numerically small, to one which was nationwide; would the framework which had functioned so well for the few stand the test when dealing with the many, or had procedures been adopted which could not be replicated all over the country?

New Materials

During the early months work continued unabated in the editorial and printing sections. With a print-run of 50,000 it was essential to commence

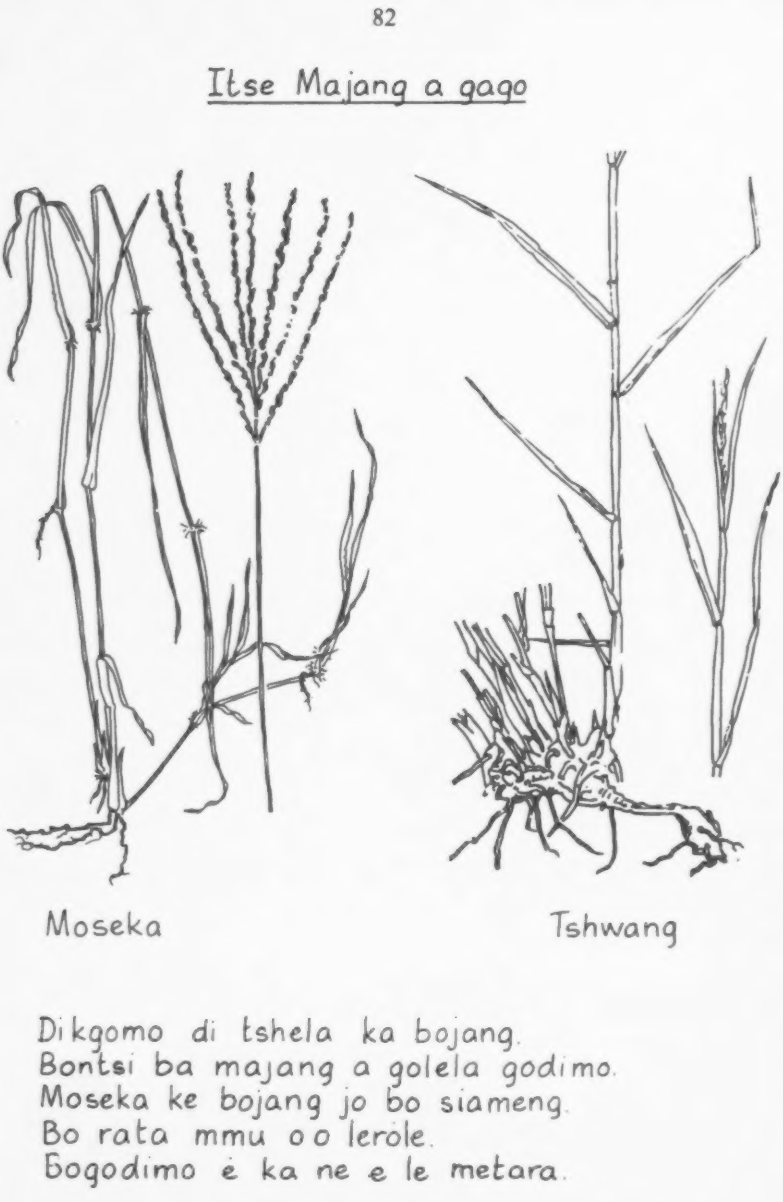
Mpepu



tsa-ma-i-sa	tsamaisa
kgo-tsa	kgotsa
mo-se-tsa-na	mosetsana
kga-me-lo-ng	kgamelong
kge-tsi-ng	kgetsing
bo-fe-fo	bofefo
kga-ra-me-tsa	kgarametsa
fa-lo-la	falola
le-tsa-pa	letsapa
a-gi-wa	agiwa

Part of a supplementary reader on the bicycle.

Basadi ba sila mabele mo kikeng.
Ba dirisa mabogo go sila mabele.
Mabogo a bone a a lapa.
Maoto a ka dira go gaisa mabogo.
Re dirisa maoto go tsamaisa baesekele.
Mpepu ke baesekele e e silang mabele.
Leoto la morago le katogile lefatshe.
Mosimane kgotsa mosetsana
o palama baesekele.
Mosadi o tshela mabele
mo kgamelong e e fa leotong la morago.
Go na le lefetlho mo kgamelong.
Fa o dikolosa leoto la morago,
ka ditobele lefetlho le a dikologa dikologa.
Le sila mabele, kana mmidi, kana dinawa,
mme le dira boupe.
Boupe bo wela mo bolekoneng
kana mo kgetsing.
Mpepu e sila ka bofefo
fa bana ba kgarametsa ka bofefo.
Basadi ba falola letsapa.
Dibaesekele tsa Mpepu
di agiwa mo Botswana.



82

Itse Majang a gago

Moseka

Tshwang

Dikgomo di tshela ka bojang.
Bontsi ba majang a golela godimo.
Moseka ke bojang jo bo siameng.
Bo rata mmu o o leròle.
Bogodimo è ka ne e le metara.

A page from a supplementary reader on grasses of Botswana.

early negotiations with the Government Printer to ensure that primer copy was ready on time. Another major problem was the lack of storage space at headquarters; a problem overcome by prompt and understanding action of the German donors who, without quibble, permitted funds from their community aid to be used for the erection of a prefabricated store room.

It had already been noted that an improved carrying device was required by LGLs, since the cardboard satchells used in 1980 had quickly disintegrated. A wooden box was designed with a flannelgraph on one outside surface and the other as a blackboard (see page 65). The construction of these boxes proved a problem since some 3500 were required. The Mochudi Carpenter's Brigade was willing to take on the contract, and by April consignments were being delivered to DNFE headquarters.

Further supplementary reading sheets were also being produced and publication of the monthly Broadsheet continued without interruption. It was not long before the Ministry of Agriculture was also publishing a regular magazine in simple Setswana.

In the informal programmes section of the Department were two associated units for home economics and environmental health. In addition to the contributions which both made to the Broadsheet, the units also produced simple readers in their respective topics to augment the more specifically 'literacy' material. The aim was to get as much into the Districts for people to read. Only in so doing could it be expected that the learners would retain their newly acquired skills.

Youth

Many of the members of the 190 literacy groups had been young people, some under the age of 14 though over the maximum age of 8 for entry into Primary Schools. It was natural that many would indeed wish to enter formal schooling, had this possibility been open to them. The matter was raised in the National Literacy Committee and referred to the Ministry of Education. Difficulties are likely to occur when over-age pupils are brought into a primary school. Conducting mixed-age classes with pupils of differing scholastic backgrounds creates problems which would tax the most gifted teachers. Nevertheless, it was quite evident as 1981 progressed that there would be an increasing flow of requests from youngsters and their parents for admission to school. Would the formal system be flexible enough to adapt its procedures to assist these people; or would they have to seek continuing succour from non-formal education? The matter is still unresolved though it is clearly an issue deserving urgent attention, and one which is by no means peculiar to Botswana.

Work Plan

It was evident that 1981 would be a very complicated year. The Department staff was increasing and there were many new people who had to be initiated into the peculiarities of NFE. The correspondence courses section was attracting an ever increasing number of students which in turn made for additional administrative and editorial work. The Literacy Programme was poised to go national with all the attendant hazards likely to emerge. There were logistic problems of production and distribution. New vehicles had to be purchased and deployed and drivers trained. There was no shortage of things which had to be done.

It was vital to ensure that the various tasks were performed at the right time and in the right sequence. A job not done could cause dislocation down the line. One of the last tasks performed in 1980 was to draw up a detailed Work Plan for 1981. Based on the experience of the experimental year, it was possible with a fair degree of accuracy to forecast the length of time required for completion of the various pieces in the jig-saw. The drafting of the work plan was not a one-man exercise. Section heads had to propose their own work schedules and these had to be collated into one overall scheme. In particular it was essential to dovetail together the production time-table within the overall perspective of the literacy programme. Time was regularly allocated at Head of Sections meetings to review progress. Where deadlines had not been achieved the underlying causes were discussed and new schedules agreed upon. It would have been quite impossible to manage DNFE without such an overall plan.

Staff

It was perhaps inevitable that the greatest worry throughout the first eight months of 1981 was that of staff. Slow progress was being made on what in Botswana is called a 'Scheme of Service', this is a schedule of jobs indicating entry requirements, duties and promotion prospects. The scheme shows how one cadre of staff in a Department relates to another. It had not been possible to design it earlier since it was only after the experimental year that there was sufficient knowledge on which it would be based. By mid-year a Department Scheme of Service was ready for submission to the Directorate of Personnel.

For the time being, however, the important thing was to recruit new staff and provide them with such training as was possible. DNFE had been allocated enough senior posts to allow for a District Officer to be deployed in each District, with two assistant District Offices in Central District, which is the most populous in the country. But allocations can remain simply as numbers on lists. There is a dire shortage of potential professisonal personnel in all departments of government and it was unlikely that DNFE would get all it needed. And so it turned out to be. Furthermore, recruitment of new staff could not commence until parliament had approved the allocations, at the beginning of the new financial year, 1st April. It was represented to the Directorate of Personnel that this procedure would mean that the new staff would miss the LA trining course which had to start in March if the annual time-table was to run to schedule, but these pleadings fell on deaf ears. The new District Officers were posted to the Department one at a time between June and September. None could assist with the various duties to be performed in the Districts and these had to be undertaken by an already overworked headquarters staff.

The development budget included special funds for literacy. These could be used at any time. The approved project document had foreseen a full complement of 150 LAs; in 1981 there were to be 120. With the 26 already in post it meant recruiting a further 94. The Directorate was to handle this and it was agreed in advance that more than this number would be invited to attend the Training Course, only those who passed being given contracts. Unfortunately, the Directorate was unable to fulfil its side of the bargain, and by the end of February it became clear that as in 1980 special recruiting arrangements would have to be made. Committees were set up in the Districts with the assistance of the DETs. In the event 120 aspiring literacy workers collected at the Agricultural Training Centre, Mahalapye on 15 March, a hot Sunday morning. All had been given travel warrants; some had undertaken pretty rough journeys of 300 and 400 kilometres. The group from Ghanzi, travelling in an open lorry, broke down twice in the desert. They arrived a week late, very tired and hungry.

LA Training

Before considering the actual training course envisaged for the 1981 cohort of LAs, it will be appropriate to reflect on such training as is possible to offer full-time junior members of staff in NFE. It has to be remembered that in Botswana, as elsewhere, no initial formal training is provided to general entrants into the civil service. Professional training was available in primary teacher-training, in agriculture and in the health service, but there was no professional course for entrants into non-formal education. Primary teacher-training colleges were not including NFE in the curriculum, and at that time the University Institute of Adult Education had not initiated its Certificate programme. Even so, it is only possible for junior staff to enrol for a Certificate course after completing some years in the field. There is still no initial professional training in NFE. It was, therefore, a particular responsibility which DNFE had to shoulder unaided. Since finances were limited it was appreciated that the training being offered the LAs could at best be regarded as sketchy and must be augmented by regular and sustained in-service training. There was not a great deal of guidance available. A recent commentary on the training of volunteers also applies to the training of junior full-time staff when it avers that 'the methodology of training volunteer literacy teachers in short courses supplemented by in-service training needs to be developed through practice and research'[1].

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[1] Lind A. and Johnston A. 'Adult Literacy in the Third World'. Stockholm, SIDA, 1986, p.92.

The intention was to provide a six-week training course for the new LAs. Delays with recruitment cut this to five. Nevertheless, that was an improvement on 1980. In five full weeks it should be possible to go over the main topics to be dealt with, leaving it once again to the District Officers to complete the training when the successful participants had been deployed to their duty stations.

The course staff consisted of the District Officers, many of whom had been in the experimental year, assisted by the 1980 cadre of LAs. This would be the best way of reinforcing their knowledge, and it has to be recorded that they turned out to be excellent at this work. Not only did they assist with the regular sessions on the teaching method; they were able to talk with the new LAs on the real life problems they would be dealing with. Their experience of group work in 1980 would now be turned to fuller account.

The course itself consisted of an introductory day on why a literacy programme had been thought to be important and how the Botswana programme was organised. Thereafter, morning sessions dealt mainly with the teaching method. Afternoons were given over to discussions on general supervision and administration and some evenings there were sessions on the use of music and drama and also occasions, which were much enjoyed, for role playing. Two field trips were arranged for the trainees to visit villages where classes were still continuing. In the final week each recruit had to conduct a class before a staff panel. This, as well as weekly progress reports, were taken into account when deciding on those to be given contracts. By the third week of April, the Department had a complement of 116 Literacy Assistants, and after a brief break they were at their duty stations. As far as was possible, LAs were assigned to their own home Districts, a policy which did not have universal approval. Some argued that these young people would be able to work with greater commitment if in unknown territory and indeed, in promoting national unity there is much to be said for posting civil servants in places away from their homes. Others urged that because of local differences in customs and language it was better for LAs to be in the environment to which they are accustomed. But who can say which proposition is correct or more likely of producing the most effective staff? - no doubt an issue which has to be faced in every country.

Evaluation

One of the principal external donors, the GTZ of Germany, had expressed the wish to send a team to Botswana to examine the programme. Further financial support would be dependent on a satisfactory report being submitted. A two man team spent April and May in the country. During this time they talked with headquarters personnel and made several unchaparoned visits to the Districts. Here they met not only full-time staff but also group leaders and learners from the 1980 classes. A lengthy report was

Ga e Golelwe

Phatwe 1981 Nomoro 9.

Kwalela go Ga e Golelwe

P.O. Box 46,
Malolwane,
Simwane

Ke lemoga gore dithuto di tla ntatlhegela. Ke raya ka gore sekolo sa rona rele baithuti ba Ga e Golelwe se eme leboka thata jaanong ke kopa ke botsang kateng. Kebe ke botsa gore batho fa ba balwa baba kwa Teransefala a le bona ba a ·alwa? Legone ke le moithuti wa Ga e Golelwe ke botsa gore a re tshwanetse go ithuta go bala le go kwala fela re sa rutiwa tse dingwe dithuto tsa two ya diatla?

Mokwadi Ke nna
Peter Kobedi

Karabo

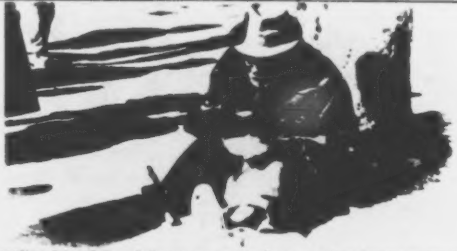
Rre Peter,
Ke itumeletse lekwalo la gago. Dithuto tsa go bala le go kwala di tloga di simololwa, jaanong ke olofela gore o tlaa tsenelela dithuto gape o ise o lebale tse o di ithutileng. Dira gore o bone Literacy Assistant kgotsa District Adult Educator ya Mochudi. Batho ba ba tlang go bala ba tla itse gore a ba ka okaretsa batho ba teransefala kgotsa nnyaa.

Pulo ya lephata la dithuto tsa bagolo

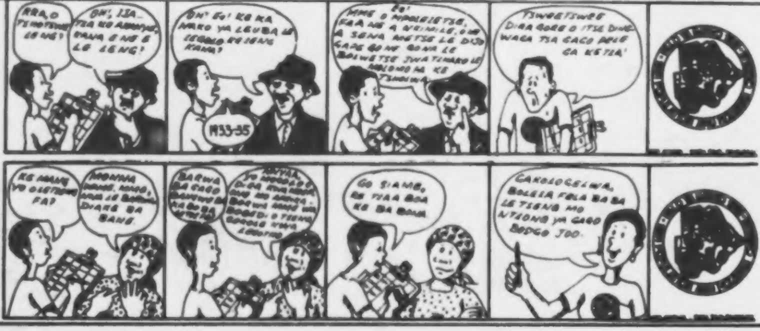
Ene yare Seetebosigo a tlhola malatsi a a ferang bobedi monongwaga ya bo ele pulo ya lephata la dithuto tsa bagolo le nngwe e e nang le ofise ya dithuto tsa bagolo. Gone go supiwa didirisiwa tsa thuto ya bagolo le mokgwa wa go ruta bagolo. Mo Mochudi go no go supiwa ditempe tse eneng ele lantlha di bonwa tse di beilweng setlhanyo sa dithuto tsa bagolo ele sone Mmakonokono. ditempe di tshwantshitswe mo Mochudi ke motshwantshi mongwe wa lephata la dipholologolo le ditshwa wa Phuthadikobo Mrs Petra Hubbard. Ditempe di supa mosola la thuto ya bagolo. Gone go supiwa le dibokoso tse di diriwang mo Mochudi di diretswe baruta bagolo go tsenya didirisiwa tsa bone mo teng gape e le boleke boroto. Dibokoso tse di direlwa kgaolo nngwe le nngwe e e nang le thuto ya bagolo mo Botswana. Di tla a bo di dirisiwa Botswana botlhe ke baruta bagolo.

Ngwaga e e fitileng ka ene e le ngwaga ya tokeletso ya thuto ya bagolo gone go na le ditlhopha di le masome a a supa le bofera bobedi mo Kgatleng. Ngwaga o, ka re na le baeteledipele ba le lesome le bongwe re tshwanetse ke go nna le ditlhopha di le lekgolo le masome a matlhano.

Mokwadi ke Ester Monageng,
Literacy Assistant ko Mochudi.



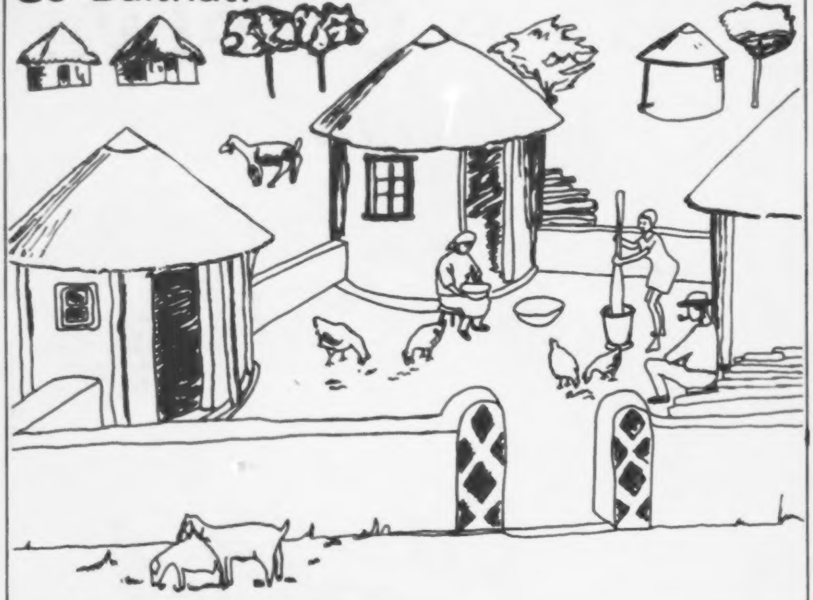
Fa godimo ke setshwantsho sa monnamogolo se se kapilweng ke mongwe wa batshwantshi ba rona mo Gaborone. Monnamogolo yo o ne a rapaletse ka fa tlase ga setlhare fa o neng a wetse teng e le tlala. Bafeti ba taela ba ne ba mo lemoga. Mmé mongwe wa lelwapa le le gaufi o ne a mo fa dijonyana.



An example of the DNFE Broadsheet.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Go Baithuti



Araba dipotso tse di latelang ka ga setshwantsho se se fa godimo.

1. Go na le matlo a le kae? ________
2. Go na le batho ba le kae? ________
3. Go na le ditlhare di le kae? ________
4. Go na le dikokwana di le kae? ________
5. Go na le dipudi di le kae? ________
6. Go na le difensetere di le kae? ________
7. Go na le makowa ya dikgong e le kae? ________
8. Go na le basadi ba le kae? ________
9. Go na le banna ba le kae? ________
10. Go na le dikika di le kae? ________

Dikarabo

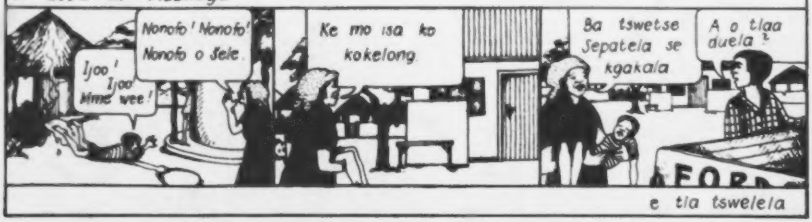
1	6	6	3
2	3	7	2
3	4	8	2
4	6	9	1
5	3	10	1

Polelo ka ba lolwapa lwa goo Moseki

Nonofo, ngwana wa ntlha wa ntlo ya goo Moseki, o tlogetse motse wa gaabo wa Mabilega, ka go ya go batla tiro. O ile ko motseng mongwe o mogolo fa gautshwane ko a batlang tiro gone a tswa ke lehela.

Polelo go fitlha fa.

Re boela ko Mabilega


Ijoo'
Ijoo'
Mme wee!
Nonofo! Nonofo!
Nonofo o šele.
Ke mo isa ko kokelong
Ba tswetse Sepatela se kgakala
A o tlaa duela?
FORD

e tla tswelela

E gatisitswe ke Lephata la Dithuto tsa Bagolo.

published[1], the gist of which was that GTZ should continue to give generous assistance to the Government for the programme. There were some minor criticisms, most notable of which was the need to encourage more active participation by other agencies, a proposal entirely in line with DNFE thinking even if the practice had not been all that it should! The report referred to the accomplishments during the initial stages of the programme as having been quite remarkable. A heart-warming boost for the morale of all concened.

It is important to keep donors fully informed of events and to have an 'open door' policy towards them, however inconvenient this may sometimes be.

Into the Districts again

The training course ended in the third week of April. There was then the Easter holiday. By the first week of May the LAs were all at their duty stations and during that month training and material preparation continued. Just filling LGL boxes with teaching material was a task which occupied several days. Towards the end of May and throughout June the LAs were taken to their cluster areas for local orientation and LGL recruitment. In view of the numbers involved, LGL training courses had to commence at the beginning of July to ensure that classes could start in August. At the same time some LAs had to be temporarily withdrawn for motor cycle training. It was a busy time, better planned in some Districts than others. It was incredible how difficult it was to persuade some senior officers to look after their vehicles; several Districts were paralysed when trucks had to go into Central Transport Organisation depots for repairs. It is practicalities of this kind which make such demands on energy, deflecting attention from the real work in hand. Indeed, there is a constant tension between what should be done and what can be done.

The Broadsheet continued to be published monthly and one LA in each District was nominated to have especial responsibility for collecting local news items and passing them on to headquartres. It was during May that the media section was strengthened by the addition of another programme producer, a man of experience with extension broadcasting, having previously worked in the Ministry of Agriculture. It was now possible to add another dimension to the literacy programme, that of a weekly broadcast providing a means of keeping in touch over the air with staff and learners in the field.

The literacy broadcast is a mix of news, advice, encouragement and song. The last named is important. Botswana are natural musicians and have an astounding ability at spontaneous creativity. Songs seem to come effortlessly from their mouths, with the most melodious harmonies and tunes. At every literacy training course, and indeed in most literacy groups, music is an important means of reinforcing what has been learnt, as well as maintaining the enthusiasm of the participants.

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[1] Roth, K. and Etherington, A. 'GTZ assistance to the National Literacy Programme of Botswana' (Bonn an Toronto, GTZ, 1981).

The Broadsheet and the radio programme gave the learners a chance of expressing their feelings and asking pertinent questions. As both developed they not only made for better communication between headquarters and field and vice versa, but also between individuals, groups and Districts. This was especially important during the time of dispersal to the Lands since it helped to promote the idea of togetherness, even for those now isolated from their colleagues. It was during 1981 that another publication emerged in one District, the South-East, namely the local News-Letter. This made it possible for there to be horizontal communication, one small community talking with another. It also enabled many more readers' letters to be published than was possible in the monthly national Broadsheet. It is to be hoped that other Districts will emulate the ingenuity of this one District, though like every innovation, it is imperative it should be sparked off by local initiative rather than as a result of headquarters prodding. As with all NFE, so much hinges on the commitment and enthusiasm of field staff.

Venues for literacy groups

It is the usual pattern for literacy groups to meet in whatever premises are available. This was certainly the case with the NLP. Community and church halls, clinic waiting rooms and primary schools, were the most usual locations for groups. Sometimes classes were held in or near the houses of LGLs. As far as possible groups were encouraged to meet inside buildings rather than outdoors under trees. Learners are easily distracted out-of-doors, and LGLs find it much harder to speak clearly so that all can hear when unprotected by a building.

Public Relations

Throughout the year it was important not only that the enthusiasm of those participating in the programme should be maintained, but that the public as a whole should be aware of the events taking place. Every opportunity was taken of giving to the one national newspaper in Botswana and to the news department of Radio Botswana, items suitable for publication or broadcasting. Advance notice of planned activities, numbers of learners, new cluster areas being formed, reactions of local dignitaries, were amongst the features which were publicised and thereby helped to ensure widespread knowledge and interest in the programme. Members of Parliament, Chiefs, District and Town Concillors, and Headmen were much more likely to support the work if they felt that the local activities in which they were involved were parts of a great national effort. Representatives of donor agencies were also keen to have information which could be passed back to their distant headquarters and consequently to those who would be taking the decisions whether or not to make finance available.

District Agricultural Shows were also times when there could be publicity not only about literacy activities but also the entire DNFE programme. Stalls were set up and staff were available to answer the many enquiries made by interested passers-by.

Community Service

It was during 1980 that a new cadre of extension workers had been created arising from a recommendation in the National Education Commission Report of 1976. This was what was initially known as Community Service and later given the Setswana name of Tirelo Sechaba. The idea is that all Form V leavers with the Cambridge Overseas Secondary Certificate from Secondary Schools would do a compulsory year of service in the rural areas, partly teaching in Primary Schools and partly performing some kind of service to the community. It is a mixture of regimented asceticism with the idealism which characterised early efforts at community development.

This is not the place to discuss the merits or otherwise of the scheme. Parliament has decreed that it will eventually become compulsory for all school leavers, though during the time under review participants were recruited voluntarily and its scope was geographically limited.

Germane to the subject of this book is that Tirelo Sechaba provided a new cadre of youth available to work in the literacy programme, and many participants opted to make group leadership their form of community activity. This, however, is contrary to what is regarded as an important consideration in the choice of LGLs, namely that they should be chosen by and be of the community. Those who are shy about the possibility of learning are more likely to join a group supervised by someone they know and whose educational qualifications are not so far above their own. Furthermore, the engagement of local people to take groups is in line with government policy of promoting self-reliance.

One-to-One Packs

Already there were two channels available for those who wanted to learn how to read and write. The 'official' programme was paralleled by the 'unofficial', that is the activities of non-governmental agencies. There was still a need for a third channel, to cater for those who for a variety of reasons did not wish to or could not join an organised group. The person whose work made this impossible as much as for the shy one who preferred to learn individually.

To meet this need a one-to-one pack was designed. A kit containing Primers one and two, teaching notes for the animateur in either Setswana or English, small work and syllable cards and some test sheets so that progress could be ascertained were compiled. These kits were available without charge from all DNFE offices.

The packs were ready for distribution in September 1981. It is not possible to guage the numbers who were actually learning through the one-to-one packs. Some, but not many, took advantage of obtaining the material. There was no means of knowing however how many were learners, how many casual readers and how many just inquisitive onlookers. It seems, however, that few took advantage of the offer, and one must conjecture why. Was the idea sufficiently discussed and approved within the Department? (The packs became available at the time of my departure). Were DAEOs sufficiently motivated to provide the packs, indeed, was enough energy and imagination put into the promotional effort? Or was it that the idea was a non-starter? That in fact there were not many people keen to learn this way? What is certain is that within months the packs were no longer being produced.

The Literacy Directory

The programme was now nationwide. There was the possibility that there would be 30 or 40 thousand learners, in some 2 to 3 thousand groups. It was essential that there should be a register of the groups and also of the group leaders who were to be in receipt of public funds.

Immediately after the 1981 training courses, when a second literacy officer had been appointed to the headquarters staff, arrangements were made for the orderly collection of data, and for this information to be brought together into what was called the Literacy Directory. This was a register, District by District and cluster by cluster, of all the groups with their location and the names of the leaders. There was space in the Directory for initial enrolments to be entered together with any important or distinguishing comments. Only groups in the Directory would be eligible for financial support.

The Directory would be published in two forms. There was to be a national version which would include all Districts. This would be primarily for headquarters use, though copies were also given to donor agencies. Then there were to be District editions, so that each District could receive sufficient copies for distribution to all local staff. After 1981 the Directory ceased publication.

The Official Opening

June 8, 1981 had been decided upon as the date when the Botswana National Literacy Programme was to be officially inaugurated.

On this day the Post Office issued a series of four commemorative postage stamps, each stamp depicting the practical advantages of being literate. These were a mother reading a letter from a relative or friend; a man filling up an official form; a youngster reading a newspaper; and parents being able to help

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The Post Office first day cover to mark the commencement nationwide of the National Literacy Programme.

their children with their school-work. Theorists on literacy have so distorted the desires of ordinary people by conjuring up deep socio-political motives for those who wish to learn. There may be an element of the political awakening which is certainly felt by many who learn basic literacy and numeracy skills. But essentially peoples' wishes are of a much more bread-and-butter kind, and the Botswana postage stamps attempted to draw attention to this.

Commentators on literacy programmes are unanimous in pointing to the significance of having public backing of the highest authority in the land. This is generally regarded as being essential for three reasons; to motivate the people by indicating the importance attached to the work; to ensure that all agencies of government give their support whenever and wherever this is needed; and to assure donors that government is wholeheartedly behind the effort. On June 8th, it was the Minister of Education, the Hon. K. P. Morake, who gave an address on the radio, and who also issued a shorter statement which was distributed throughout the country in the form of a poster. His unreserved encouragement was a major element in bringing the programme to fruition.

Literacy posters had been distributed in advance to District offices, and in every District there were local festivities to mark the day. These included special Khotla meetings addressed by the Chief, singing and dancing. In the capital, Gaborone, shops displayed special literacy posters and one shop donated a window in which was a display illustrating what the literacy programme was all about and how it would operate. The national newspaper carried many columns on the programme together with photographs, and radio news bulletins through the day made lengthy references to it.

Since it is important that disappointments should be recorded as much as successes, it has to be said that three forms of publicity did not materialise. The South African company which has the monopoly on the sale of matches in Botswana, was asked whether it would print either letters on the backs of the boxes or produce them with domino designs to encourage numeracy. The local soft drink bottling company was similarly asked if letters could be printed on the insides of the bottle tops. Learners could then collect these and use them for word games. It had also been hoped to issue a commemorative '45' disc of literacy songs recorded in the Disricts, but this idea had to be abandoned due to the cost involved.

But despite these minor setbacks, the eighth of June was the day when the literacy programme became a part of Botswana life. There could be but few who had not heard about it when the sun set.

Some recruiting difficulties

There had been one or two cases during 1980 of communities rejecting the idea of starting literacy groups, and it seemed likely that similar circumstances might be met in 1981. In one District there had been a few isolated places where large ranch owners had shown a disinclination for their farm workers to join classes. This may have been for fears that attendance at a literacy group would distract workers from their argricultural chores.

In 1981 a new form of resistance manifested itself in desert areas which had been in receipt of sustenance through the World Food Programme. There were several examples of communities insisting that the distribution of food should be re-commenced as a prerequisite for starting literacy groups, a demand which DNFE was quite unable to meet. Patient reasoning often dissipated such opposition, but it has to be admitted that there were places which persisted with this approach. Desert life is incredibly hard and food is the over-riding priority. It was a salutary reminder that material bread must come first before other diets will be acceptable. The attitude of the people facing the rigours of an unrelenting environment was a perfectly understandable human response. It was an example where educators need to work closely with other extension staffs, a lesson to be learned not only in Botswana but throughout the world.

All set for the 1981 programme

By the beginning of August, most Districts had completed the preliminary training of staff and organisation of groups. All was set for the go-ahead. Because there were only 116 LAs, instead of the projected 150, the target figure for learners was reduced from 50,000 to around 35,000. The late recruitment of field staff, already referred to, had meant that some Districts would not be able to meet even these reduced targets. Nevertheless, it was clear by the end of the month that the objective of launching the programme on a nation-wide basis had been acheived. In the event, the total registered learners in the 1981 programme was 23,630.

1982 - 1987

Much has taken place in these five years, when I have been but a bystander. For that reason, it is not possible to supply a detailed account of events. The intention of this narrative was to indicate the steps which were taken to launch the programme, that is to draw out some especial considerations associated with the three steps of consultation, experimentation and national implementation.

However, the saga would be incomplete without this epilogue.

There have been several developments which should be noted. In the first instant, the programme continues to operate. Indeed almost alarmingly, the organisation, content of the primers and the teaching method are basically as in 1981. Little has changed. Annual intakes have increased, and the total number of participants, though below the projections made at the beginning, are nevertheless quite considerable (Table 3). There must be approaching two hundred thousand people who at one time or another have been associated with this programme; that is a fifth of the total population of the country. This is heartening. 'Let the People Learn' is a slogan with reality. Many of the original cohort of LAs are still in post and many have been upgraded on taking the University Certificate in Adult Education and re-designated as Extension Educators. There is now the emergence of a career ladder for professionals in NFE, and for the future this is perhaps the most significant development to have taken place. For unless young people can see a future in NFE, comparable in every respect to formal education, it will be difficult to attract and keep them in it. If in education as a whole there can be the possibility of staff mobility between the two sectors, so much the better.

Before commenting further, it should be emphasised that the National Literacy Programme was never seen as being the total solution to illiteracy in Botswana. The out-of-school programme was designed to be a complement to the in-school work at the primary level. Both are needed if a literate society is to be created; each reinforces the other. The adults and youths out-of-school can encourage as well as learn from their relatives and friends in-school. To this end, it is most important to ensure that the material used throughout is uniform; not in content since that must be relevant for different categories of learners; but in orthography, in the form of the letters and numbers and in the way the skill of writing is taught. In Botswana this degree of uniformity was established so that the in-school and out-of-school work were kept in harmony.

It has often been noted that where formal and non-formal seek to co-operate, in the end it is the greater muscle of formal education which attracts the resources, and non-formal education loses out. Certainly, where non-formal education is poorly led and fails to make its position clear, it will lose, and deserve to do so. But where its aims are cogently presented, it should be possible for a satisfactory modus operandi to be arranged. In the case of literacy, it is absolutely essential for non-formal educationists and those responsible for primary education to work closely together. To fail to do so is to raise doubts as to the professionalism of all concerned.

As was to be expected there have been several welcome innovations, and things which were either overlooked or of second priority in the early days have now been accomplished. Though the basic teaching method has remained unaltered, a higher degree of sophistication is found amongst many of the Literacy Group Leaders who have continued to take groups for three years. They are now better able to diversity their lessons and to introduce small peer-group teaching, by which more able participants can help their less favoured colleagues. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that LGLs are themselves only at the primary level of learning, a policy which has been vindicated. Adults in a community prefer to be taught by someone they know than by a stranger.

The amount of supplementary reading has increased, and the Broadsheet continues to be popular. It is a mistake to think that because a person has been illiterate their interest will be circumscribed and directed mainly towards improving their economic or social lot. Reading material providing good advice is undoubtedly welcome, but so too are all the other varieties of literature. Novels, poems, sport news and commentary on the national and international political scene are just as avidly read. The only difference between an illiterate and a literate person is that the latter can read; what excites and interests them will be the same.

Initially the Literacy Programme had been restricted to using only the Setswana language. As the programme spread out to the country as a whole, the inadequacy of being held to this decision became increasingly apparent. The more remote is a community, the more necessary it is to be adapting the nationally produced material to make allowance for local variants of dialect and vocabulary. Clearly this increases the cost of the programme; if the needs of the learners are regarded as paramount it is a charge to be accepted. It also reinforces the decision taken at the outset of the programme, that LAs should be posted to their home areas and LGLs people of the community in which the groups are operating. Both LA and LGL can help to make such local variants to the programme as are needed. As had been anticipated earlier, there were requests for classes in English. These were from people in the towns and larger villages.

It is at the point of providing continuing stimulus for new literates that problems arise. How long ought people to be allowed to remain in literacy groups? When ought other line Ministries to come in with technical instruction? If commercial firms introduce reading material for purchase, will the new literate spend money on them? Has reading become a valued skill? These are the kind of questions which demand answers as the programme progresses.

It will be recalled that initially the programme was budgeted on the assumption that learners would remain in it for two years. The first would be a teaching year and the second for continuing 'after-care'. At the same time it was agreed that the programme should be without charge. Primary education is free and there seemed no justification to level a fee for literacy classes. It must be admitted, however, that this undoubtedly contributed to the unwillingness of people to allow groups to disband. Participants were loth to admit success since the literacy group had become an enjoyable social event. But clearly government could not continue indefinitely to pay the bill. In some cases other ministries or voluntary organisations were able to take over. And in order to ensure that all communities would have the opportunity of learning it was agreed that in general classes should be held for three years in a locality and that thereafter any further action had to be a result of voluntary endeavour.

Some have said that the Botswana programme is over centralised; that there was insufficient allowance for consumer consultation and that local variants were disallowed. It is a problem to know how much decentralisation is practicable when launching something which is new, and for which there are few people available with the skills which are needed. It is a central precept of NFE that the participant be involved in decision making. How far ought this tenet be taken? In Botswana, communities could opt whether to come into the programme, decide who should do the instructing, and when and where groups should meet. In general Districts decided the overall direction the programme would take. But neither participated very fully in designing the materials used. There were thus some decisions which the participants took; some were made at the District level and some nationally. Was this striking a fair balance? Some decisions had to be taken at the national level. As far as possible, however, the consumers were consulted on all the issues which most directly affected them, and this was vitally important. Do you want a group? Who will lead it? When will it meet? and where? These questions were left entirely to the participants to answer. It has been grass roots pressure which is now requesting DNFE to institute a Literacy Certificate. There are dangers in introducing what some derisively set aside as mere pieces of paper. From the start of the programme Certificates of Attendance have been given to those who diligently came to sessions. But the demand is now for something which could either open the door to employment or make entry into formal education a possibility.

The pros and cons of Literacy Certificates are already well known. How to ensure that the piece of paper has real value poses many problems. Initially the idea was resisted; on reflection there is value in a District-set test of literacy and numeracy. There are serious complications when establishing a national examination. A locally organised test can make full allowance for differences of dialect and spelling, be more environmentally correct, and easier to administer. Furthermore, if participants want Certificates, why should they be disappointed? If the 'piece of paper', so contemptuously belittled by academic theorists, means much to the recipient, is it not better and more positive to go along with the idea?

It has been an on-going struggle to ensure inter-agency co-operation, a grouse heard almost universally. There is no one prescription which will guarantee a remedy and transform inter-ministerial rivalry and jealousy into worthwhile co-operation. But in the case of the Botswana experience (and no doubt this is the case elsewhere) the National Literacy Committee played a dominant part initially in not only bringing the various agencies together but in stimulating thought leading to decisions on the crucial questions concerning the work. A strong national committee will retain its potency only so long as it feels it is the decision making body. If it is allowed to degenerate into being a chatty report-receiving operation, senior people will get disenchanted and juniors will be left to attend meetings, unable by themselves to take decisions.

Literacy is one rung on the ladder of advancement; it may not be the first; it clearly is not a terminal point. Once people have learnt how to read they will wish to make use of this hard earned skill. There are two ways in which learners can be helped, and both have been attempted by DNFE during the five years under review. The first is the availability of more reading material and the provision of modest reading rooms, since home conditions are often uncongenial for quiet study. DNFE is currently experimenting with providing communities with reading rooms. Another source would be primary and secondary schools at slack times of the day and week. Unfortunately, so many Heads in formal education are unwilling to make even this small gesture of concern for out-of-school people. The second, and possibly the most important avenue of development is to ensure that the other line ministries are fully playing their part in providing suitable after care. For example that Agricultural Demonstrators are aware of those who have participated in literacy programmes and are in need of further instruction. The same can be said of all the agents of extension. DNFE attempted to provide facilities for learning what are termed 'income; generating skills'. On a small scale a department of the Ministry of Education may be able successfully to make provision of this kind. It is doubtful whether it has the resources and the expertise to do so nationally. For simply learning income-generating skills is not enough; there has to be advice on costing and the availability of credit to purchase supplies and outlets in which to market finished products. These are fields well outside the competence of a Ministry of Education[1].

A most important ingredient in continuing education is the provision of a lively newspaper in which the language used is pitched at the level of the readers and which is produced in an attractive manner. Such a publication is often referred to as a rural newspaper; it is as necessary amongst the less privileged urban dwellers. In Botswana DNFE has led the way with the production of the Broadsheet. Inevitably this was intially a modest publication. It is essential that it should develop into a more professionally produced newspaper, without losing its central aim of serving the needs of people with limited reading ability. The apparent failure of the Broadsheet to have emerged into a more nationally accepted journal is undoubtedly a failing calling to be rectified.

And finally, since 1981, NLP has been evaluated officially twice. The first was what is termed a participatory evaluation, being undertaken mainly by staff of the department, assisted by people connected with German and Swedish donors. The process stretched over two long years and must have had the effect of deflecting energy from pursuing the real work, namely enabling people to learn literacy and numeracy skills. Since the programme has gone on largely as it did before this thorough examination was made it must be assumed that the results simply reinforced what was already known. A second evaluation, under the University Institute of Adult Education, is underway and the results are summarised in an epilogue to this narrative.

It is essential that evaluation techniques provide the information desired. To ask an LGL to make public criticism of an LA, or to expect an LA to give a wholly accurate picture of relationships with those above and below where there are negative features, is simply unrealistic. For such information there is no substitute for patient, sustained objective observing by neutral people. Participatory evaluation can go so far; it can enable data to be collected supported by some comment; it cannot provide the whole picture. One suspects that some of the evaluation mystiques have been conjured up by armchair theorists with little or no field experience. And it is as well to remember that a plant will struggle to live if dug up frequently to have its roots inspected; a literacy programme will also struggle if it is constantly being put under the spotlight. The programme is the first priority.

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[1] Philip Coombs makes the following comment on this issue 'No Ministry of Education possesses – or can hope to possess – the wide varieties of specialised competence required to operate effectively in all of the diverse fields in which adult education is needed' (UNESCO, Prospects, Vol XV, No 1, 1985, page 30).

For an evaluation to be of any value it should state clearly what has been achieved and where there are shortcomings what they are and how they might be remedied. And these comments must be produced with all speed; delay destroys much of their value.

An examination of the other major programme of DNFE, the correspondence courses will now be made.

III. Correspondence Courses

Background

DNFE inherited a system of secondary education by correspondence from the BEC. It will be recalled that that institution had been established in 1973 with funds provided largely by the Ford Foundation with professional assistance from a British based correspondence institution, the International Extension College of Cambridge. A principal aim of the BEC was to introduce an alternative means whereby drop-outs from the formal system could continue to study at the secondary level. This it was hoped, would reduce the clamour for places at private secondary schools.

Though it appeared difficult to be precise over the number of active students, during the period under consideration enrolments stood at about two and half to three thousand, of whom two-thirds were at the Junior Certificate level (Form III), the others studying for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examination (Form V)[1]. As the Minister of Education once remarked, DNFE is the largest secondary school in the country[2]. Indeed, the work of the Correspondence Section is so closely allied to that of the Secondary Department that it would be better placed there rather than with non-formal education, a view which might well have prevailed were it not that BEC, from its inception, was created to be concerned with more than correspondence education. It was to be the institution carrying out the Ministry's responsibilities in NFE, and correspondence courses were regarded as being a part of this. That they became the dominant activity in the BEC was largely because professional backing came from an organisation specialising in distance education.

The comments which follow refer mainly to the period 1978 to 1981.

The Clientele and their demands

The people who are registering for courses with the Department are immediate school leavers, some as young as 13 and 14 years of age, up to those in their thirties who are still hopeful of obtaining the all important piece of paper as a means of attaining a better life. Many of the older students in fact left the formal system 15 or more years previously and after a period in the wilderness studied for their primary school leaving certificate at a night continuation class. Once having overcome that hurdle they hopefully continued with their studies. But the great majority of the students fell into the younger groups. They are those who having scraped through their primary schooling did not gain admission to a secondary school, together with those who either failed their Junior Certificate (Form III) and wished to re-take it, or who having passed that examination could not continue to higher education. This could be either because their pass marks were not good enough or their parents could not continue to pay the considerable fees exacted for a place in secondary school[1]. Females outnumber males by over three to one.

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[1] Figures published in 1985 were 1,558 students at the JC level and 573 taking Cambridge.

[2] The Hon. K. P. Morake in an unpublished speach at the official opening of the Department of Non-Formal Education building, Gaborone, July 1980.

The demand has been for courses which exactly replicate those offered in the secondary schools. It is unfortunate that at both levels educators seem to have exerted little effort to get the syllabi made more suitable for out-of-school candidates, people who have entered the adult world and are less likely to be motivated by being given the same diet as is purveyed in schools. This is even more pathetically to be seen at the lower, primary, level where adults in their twenties and thirties are wasting their time on learning, mainly by rote, much material which will be of very little practical use to them. In the section on non-formal education in National Development Plan V, reference is made to the need to adapt school syllabi for out-of-school students, an investigation which DNFE has promoted. But for the time being, the courses on offer are largely school courses, and one cannot blame the students; all they want is a qualification, since they have learnt that this is the only way in which they can advance in the modern world.

Before leaving the students, mention should be made of the recruitment policy which DNFE inherited. Students could enrol at any time, and the practice of free-pacing was strictly adhered to, almost as though it were an inviolable canon of faith. Radio slots, newspaper announcements and friend-to-friend commendation were the principal means of advertising. When DNFE was established the fees charged for a course did not include text books. These a student had to order separately from the bookshop in the capital. This invariably meant a delay of weeks and sometimes months, and seriously undermined the confidence and interest of the learners. Such an arrangement had to be changed, but not without difficulty. The aim was to have a single composite fee for each subject to be studied, regardless of the length of time required by the student, and inclusive of everything, with the exception of the entrance fee to the examination. The course fee could be paid in instalments. A problem arose over the inclusion of text books since as a Government Department there were rules concerning the sale of what was in effect public property. Eventually the obstacles were overcome and it was agreed to charge Pula 10 (about £6)[1] for each Junior Certificate subject, and Pula 15 for one at the Cambridge level. It was sometimes the case that the text books would eat up all of the fee, though increasingly the course workbooks were being improved to obviate the necessity of many books. The main exceptions were in Setswana and English where several set books were required. This essentially student-centred approach has since been reversed due to the rising cost of books.

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[1] In the Budget speach, H.H. the Vice President of Botswana said, "after due consideration Government had decided that secondary school fees will be abolished effective from 1988". Gaborone, Government Printer, 1987. Whether this also applies to DNFE secondary correspondence courses has not been made clear.

At about the time when DNFE was established, former BEC students were reaching the point of taking examinations. It was not easy to know, from the list of candidates, who had taken the examination. Many out of undue eagerness took the test before they were ready. The known results showed a consistently low pass rate[2].

Subjects

The subjects offered are some of those taken in school, namely Setswana, English, Mathematics, Human and Social Biology, History, Geography, Social Studies and Book-keeping. Unfortunately, none of the applied subjects in the school syllibi are available due to the limitations of distance teaching techniques. Thus too heavy reliance on correspondence education inevitably results in reduced opportunities for studying what are regarded by many as being essential ingredients in a modern education. The choice of human and social biology as the representative science subject was made purely because this is one which lends itself most readily to study by correspondence.

The task of preparing the student workbooks was undertaken locally, although initially courses from elsewhere were used but proved to be unsatisfactory, having been written in a wholly different environment. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation generously made funds available jointly to the Governments of Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho to facilitate this work and as a result several courses were prepared. Arising out of this co-operative effort grew an organisation enabling representatives of the three staffs to meet every six months for informal consultation, at which views and ideas could be exchanged. This was regional co-operation on a sensible scale, and so very different from the grandios and highly expensive regional organisations which exist elsewhere where meetings can so easily degenerate into little more than enjoyable outings for Directors!

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[1] At 1980 prices.

[2] At the 1985 examinations, 398 students sat the JC exam and 25% passed; 45 students sat Cambridge and 31% passed. These figures do not indicate the number of students who, for various reasons, had dropped out. The installation of a computer in 1987 should make it possible for DNFE to supply accurate information regarding student progress. (Ministry of Education Annual Report 1985/6).

Mention should be made here of a link which was forged between formal and non-formal education. Private community junior secondary schools were continuing to be established throughout the country. Many of these experienced great difficulty in attracting teachers, and most especially in Mathematics and Science, but even in other subjects untrained and ill prepared teachers were being employed. The Department was able to make available subject sets to such schools. In this way a weak teacher could be greatly assisted by being given ordered and systematic material on which to base the lessons[1].

Staff

The on-going work of revising the scripts, not only as shortcomings became evident but also to keep up with changes in the syllibi, was done by the staff of the Section assisted by temporary assistants. In 1981, DNFE had only four such officers, known as Course Development Officers, in English, Setswana, Geography and History. This was a wholly inadequate staff and the need to have at least one full-time professional in every subject was constantly being voiced. Additional established posts were made from time-to-time, but there was then the task of finding competent people to fill them. In some subjects, notably science and mathematics, the shortage is such that even schools are under-staffed in these critical areas.

Course Development Officers have several functions to fulfil. They are responsible for improving upon and adapting the scripts. They can do this only if they keep a watchful eye on the work which the students send in. In the main the written work is marked by part-time tutors, but the Course Development Officers skim off a percentage of the exercises so that they can see how things are going. Alas too, they have to examine how the markers are marking. Simply to indicate that a sum is wrong is not going to help a student hundreds of kilometres away to improve his arithmetic.

The office staff which DNFE employed consisted of four clerks and a secretary; not enough but all that was permitted, and with proper supervision they could handle the work. The administrative routines of student enrolment and handling of scripts were those in general use in such institutions and need not be further described. One extraordinary defect which had to be corrected was that scripts from the same student were liable to be seen by different markers. This was the case in the popular subjects where several markers were employed. It is clearly vital that as close a relationship as is possible should be

[1] The need for this support has largely fallen away. Since 1985 teachers in Community Junior Secondary Schools have been appointed by the Ministry of Education.

developed between student and marker. Only in this way can the marker monitor progress and provide the best advice to the client.

The Head of the Section was nominally also the Student Adviser, though how someone sitting at headquarters could hope to fulfil this function was doubtful. With the appointment of District Officers this work was increasingly decentralised, since they had a closer relationship with students than is possible for a headquarters based officer. One of the shortcomings of distance education is its impersonal nature, a feature which has to be mitigated in every way possible.

The learning method

The method of instruction was that widely used in distance teaching combining three modes of learning. These are through the use of written material incorporating exercises which the student had to complete and return; by such group or individual instruction by tutors as could be arranged; and through radio programmes, some of which were also put onto cassettes so that groups of students could play them at any time. The written scripts were entirely in English. Though not the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of students, it is the language used for instruction in secondary schools. The students were supplied with prepaid addressed envelopes for mailing their work to headquarters in Gaborone. For students in outlying areas there would be an interval of 4 to 8 weeks before receiving back their marked material.

The personal instruction was organised on a District basis through Study Centres. In some Centres locally recruited tutors might be available to help individual students attending either evening or week-end sessions. Elsewhere Centres simply provided students with a quiet and adequately lit venue, equipped with desks, where they could work by themselves. For the majority of students, homesteads provided an unsuitable atmosphere for disciplined study due to poor lighting and noise. Though there were a number of Centres functioning, their effectiveness depended on the degree of interest which the District Officer was willing to take in their organisation. However, the Centres really only catered for those in the large towns and villages. Occasional week-end meetings helped those living in remote areas who had the time and money to come in, but any objective assessment of the value of the Centres would indicate they were of marginal benefit and then only to a small proportion of students. It was impossible for tutors to offer group teaching since the system of free pacing meant that there were seldom more than one or two students studying the same lesson.

The third component in the learning package are the radio programmes, usually of about twenty minutes duration, one or two being broadcast weekly with repeats. Just as group teaching was virtually impossible, it was also impossible in most subjects to provide an instructional element over the radio. The main exception to this was for Setswana and English set books where it was possible to reach numbers of students studying the same material at the same time. Homilies on hints for studying were broadcast to prepare students for the ordeal of sitting examinations. But the usefulness of the radio was largely neutralised through first, insistance on free-pacing, and secondly on the lack of expertise in writing effective radio scripts.

The insistence by Course Development Officers that English only be used, whether on the written scripts or on the radio, was a demonstration of failure to comprehend the difficulty students experienced in mastering a foreign language. It was a matter of regret that this attitude towards using the mother tongue could not be changed during the period covered by this narrative.

1981 - 1987

During 1981 and the early part of 1982, it seems that the decision was taken to enrol as many students as applied for courses. This was a laudable attitude so long as the administration could cope with large numbers and those on the pedagogical side maintain standards. Can the Course Development Officers increase their quota of scripts to be scrutinised; can sufficient competent markers be found; can printers maintain the supply of scripts; can District Officers increase Study Centre venues to make provision for the burgeoning number of students? How far positive responses were made to these questions is a matter of conjecture. What is known is that by 1985 enrolment had to be numerically restricted and registration curtailed to a month or so at the beginning of the year. From the several thousands on the lists of DNFE, in 1985 the number of active students was given as 2,131.

What will be the major change on the operations of this section of DNFE is the installation of a computer. Once this has been achieved it should be possible speedily to obtain up-to-date information on how each student is progressing. This will help the Course Development Officers to supervise more closely the work of each student and with the markers and Study Centre tutors to ensure that difficulties which are inhibiting further learning are ameliorated. District Officers can be given complete lists of students studying in their localities and they should then be able to organise day, evening and week-end classes for them. There is, however, a word of caution to be added. The computer can be of service in making the operation of correspondence courses more efficient. It could, however, retard what would seem to be the right approach for distance learning, namely the decentralisation of as many parts of the operation as possible. If a centralised computer system makes it essential that all marking be done centrally for example, then the instrument could become an obstacle to improvement. In short, the computer must be the servant and not the master. Furthermore it cannot substitute for the personal care which staff, at headquarters and in the field, must take. The students are individual people, each with individual problems. They must not become computerised digits.

WITH HINDSIGHT

This part will divide into two sections. First, there will be consideration of some of the issues which flow from the Botswana experience and which are of international concern. The second section will review wider educational issues, drawing on working experience of some twenty Third World countries over almost thirty years.

The Botswana Programme

As a breed, workers in non-formal education tend to be self deprecatory and somewhat reluctant to record successes. This is understandable. Worldwide NFE is still the poorest sector of education and though it is gaining greater recognition it still has to contend with those particularly demanding partners, secondary and technical education. And the less than adequate resources voted to it are sometimes further devalued by unsympathetic government personnel concerned with recruitment, who, trained at an earlier time, have little appreciation of what non-formal education can acheive. And to this is added the risks involved of having to depend on fallible government transport organisations.

Having said this it is important, therefore, at the outset, to record the achievements of the Botswana programme. And the first is that DNFE is nine years old and continues to be a force in the country. Its logo is known still in every District. The National Literacy Programme must by now have reached out to 200,000 men, women and youths. Not as many as originally hoped, but nevertheless 20% of the population of the country[1]. It has been described as the biggest effort in non-formal education since Botswana became an independent soverign state.[2] No other branch of education can claim to have acheived such phenominal growth in so short a time. And all at a cost of pula 25 (approximately £10 English 15 $ American) for each learner participant! There are nearly 2,500 students studying by correspondence, and an unknown number being helped by radio and the Broadsheet. It can be reasonably claimed that its staff of 200 have made a notable contribution to the nations' development.

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[1] Several reasons can be cited for the shortfall of 50 to 75,000 participants on original estimates during the initial 5-year period of the programme. These may include 1) failure to appoint staff in sufficient number and at the right time, 2) changes in management of the Department, 3) lack of commitment on the part of some staff, 4) lack of active co-operation by some District Extension Teams and some line Ministries. To blame the shortfall wholly on a too ambitious initial calculation is probably fallacious. Nor was there any shortage of participants; rather it was administrative and organisational deficiencies which reduced recruitment.

[2] An evaluation of the Botswana National Literacy Programme: Institute of Adult Education, Gaborone, 1987, p.114.

The two main programmes of DNFE make a strange partnership and may be unique. The combination of basic literacy and secondary 'second chance' school courses are not what would be generally found together in one department. Indeed, earlier it was suggested that when the correspondence courses were first initiated they could perhaps better have been controlled by the Secondary Department of the Ministry. If that had happened it would surely have made Secondary Schools more responsive to the needs of external students studying in their locality. But that was not to be, and DNFE had to be planned on the basis of a partnership of these two somewhat dissimilar partners.

However, this unusual mixture has its virtues. Conscientious District Officers readily saw that the supervision to be exercised over the literacy learners was essentially the same as caring for the lonely correspondence student. In both cases it is a matter of concern for people in need of opportunities to learn. Some are on the bottom rung of the ladder; some are higher up- both lack confidence and deserve encouragement. And by keeping these two in the same department, a vision was created of a ladder of hope which all who wished could climb. There is, of course, a large gap in the DNFE programme which cannot be filled by DNFE alone. It required flexibility and sympathy on the part of those in formal education so that there can be some mobility between the two systems. It requires greater co-operation with the other line ministries in the provision of post literacy basic education. Nevertheless, there are signs of movement. The current (1985-91) National Development Plan makes three encouraging proposals. First, by 'offering the use of school facilities for non-formal activities"[1], which gives the go-ahead to require schools to co-operate with DNFE. Second, that 'the National Literacy Programme will play a vital role in achieving universal primary education, in that children can get their basic education in reading, writing and arithmetic in literacy groups, if they live in communities that do not have access to primary education"[1], and thereafter that it is 'important that young people who graduate from the National Literacy Programme can enter the primary school system at appropriate levels"[1]. And thirdly, DNFE 'will co-operate with other relevant departments within the Ministry of Education in order to create an integrated approach to secondary school education and to adapt the correspondence courses to the new secondary school curriculum"[1]. How far DNFE will take up these challenging proposals remains to be seen. If implemented, the DNFE gap will begin to close. It would close more quickly if other ministries of government showed greater willingness to co-operate in providing an integrated approach to extension education. Regretfully, the National Development Plan notes that 'involvement (in the Literacy Programme) by other government departments has been less than expected'[1].

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[1] National Development Plan 1985-1991, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Government Printer, Gaborne, pages 125, 135, 158.

The lesson to be learned from Botswana is surely this. Non-formal educators must not be too exclusive with whom they co-inhabit. In this case, the coming together of what might be termed semi-formal with non-formal can precipitate beneficial results. The more formal and non-formal can work together the better. It is no good expecting other line ministries to co-operate, if those within the 'education' family itself cannot work closely together.

The Literacy Programme

One feature stands out before all else. A literacy programme can be launched and maintained successfully without socialist dictation and the rattling of political slogans. Botswana is not the first country to prove this. It does, however, add to the evidence that whilst the programme has to be within the priorities laid down by government, it need not be associated with a particular political movement. That literacy per se can generate its own momentum. That in an open democratic society people will be as keen to learn as in one under a socialist one-party regime. For me this was first demonstrated in the Kingdom of Swaziland, where the Sabenta literacy programme successfully organised literacy and 'post literacy' classes. It has been proved again in Botswana.

Arising from these comments, a rule of general application can be formulated. It is simply this. To be successful, the approach to a literacy programme 'has to be tailored to the particular political, social and cultural conditions prevailing in each country. It will only work where this is done'[2]. It is a pity that so much of the literature on literacy has been concentrated on the mass campaigns of socialist countries. These clearly indicate one approach. But if the countries offering literacy programmes were to be counted, one suspects that they would be a minority. That, in fact, in the majority of cases, the method adopted has been one of gradualism, with the adult literacy programme progressing year after year and planned in tandem with the work being done for children in primary schools.

It has already been noted that participants have shown some reluctance to discontinue being members of a literacy class. Though officially there is a three-year limit on formal attendance, many men and more particularly women wish to remain in their groups. Whilst this may provoke administrative and financial difficulties, it is surely also a symbol of strength and vitality. For the literacy group in a particular society is making good the absence of an alternative voluntary commmunity organisation. Indeed, the literacy group has a strength which non-governmental organisations often lack. Its non-alignment to any sector of the community, or conversely its openness to all, means that it is truly a body of interest to the whole community. Indeed, the argument could be taken a stage further. Though the NLP as a whole has no political association, a literacy group in a community may, because of its cohesiveness, become a local political reality to be taken seriously by the authorities. This stage may not yet have been reached in Botswana. It does suggest, however, that politicians and others in authority should listen carefully to the views expressed in literacy groups.

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[1] National Development Plan 1985-1991, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Government Printer, Gaborne, pages 125, 135, 158.

[2] Lind, A., Johnston, A., 'Adult Literacy in the Third World', Stockholm, SIDA, 1986, p.87.

The uselessness of teaching people to read when there is little for them to read has attracted the attention of many commentators. In Botswana the amount of literature in Setswana is very limited. The Broadsheet was published monthly from the inception of the Literacy Programme and distributed as widely as possible, but this was but one item for people to read, followed later by a magazine-type publication of the Ministry of Agriculture. In view of this paucity of reading material, it was perhaps surprising that so many wanted to learn the skill. Attendance at church services contributed to the motivation, as also did the desire to read personal letters. But if all these factors are taken together it still remains that there is remarkably little to read, since most public signs are in English. This prompted a growing conviction that what is imprecisely termed 'post-literacy' should be organised simultaneously with the actual literacy programme itself. That side-by-side with the commencement of classes should be the free distribution of as much literature as possible. Flood the country with exciting and interesting literature; whet appetites and arouse curiosity; then introduce the idea of literacy classes. This is the pattern set by commercial entrepreneurs; there is a lesson here for educators. Of course the literature on offer should be of various kinds. Some of this will be of the 'do-good' variety; there must also be as wide a variety of literature as possible, with an eye being kept on interesting the main groups in the community, women, men, youths, sports enthusiasts, farmers, church goers, etc. It seems that there is a tendency to neglect literature for men, or put conversely, there is usually more which is available likely to be of interest to women. Where this is the case it is important to redress the balance.[1]

It is appropriate at this point to interpose a comment applicable throughout the Third World. If non-formal education, in its many facets, is to be taken seriously it is essential that a planned strategy be worked out. Obviously not in minute detail since that would be likely to inhibit the emergence of local variants. But in broad outline it is essential that governments should indicate the contributions expected of non-formal education and how these goals will be achieved. Such a plan would indicate how the educative needs of the post-school age illiterate, semi-literate and literate will be met. It would lay down the responsibilities to be undertaken by each Ministry as well as for parastatal and voluntary organisations. In short, it would provide an overall integrated strategy for non-formal extension education. It would also include the guidelines for the Ministry responsible for literacy work by establishing national priorities and indicating its tasks in continuing basic education.

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[1] Some literacy programmes (China, Colombia, etc.) have made considerable use of comics. A valuable bibliography on comics and development has been made by John A. Lent in Development Communication Report, Autumn 1986, pp.12, 13.

The need to decentralise operations is universally accepted, and needs little further elaboration. As was noted in chapter II, a balance has to be struck between what has to be done centrally and what must be left for local decision. It is important to ensure that some of the written material is produced in the District or Region. A local News-letter, for example, enables there to be horizontal communication between groups, a useful factor in maintaining enthusiasm. Supplementary lesson material, incorporating items of special interest to learners in a locality, can also be produced. This makes the task of learning relevant and interesting.

In a following section of this chapter, I refer to the need for those in education to be committed to the work. By and large, those working in NFE in the field are having to rely on their own personal integrity and enthusiasm to do their work conscientiously. It is easier to do nothing, and get away with it, in extension education than in any other branch of the profession. It is difficult to check on people; the introduction of systems of management information forms is no answer since data can be so easily fabricated. In Botswana, District officers had to submit a monthly report on their activities. There was little that could be done to check their accuracy. Fortunately, in 1980 and 1981 there was no need to do so. But it does have to be borne in mind that so much does depend on the basic honesty of the individual. A very high standard of professional integrity is essential if NFE is to operate successfully.

A habit found especially amongst officers who feel their own superiority, is to talk down not only to the learners in a literacy group but also to any staff deemed to be of inferior status. One of the hardest lessons to put over to District Adult Education Officers, for instance, was that their task is to serve and not subjugate their fellow citizens who happen to have less formal education than they. In part this is again a manifestation of the civil service attitude. Senior civil servants seldom have the humility to see their work as a service of assistance to others. And so it is in a literacy programme. Some District Officers preferred to have resort to a dictatorial approach rather than the more compassionate and difficult one of offering a helping hand.

Non-Governmental Organisations

This leads on to what was a weakness in the Botswana scene, namely the comparative lack of power of the non-governmental, voluntary organisations.[1] The point was made in chapter II that they are excluded from the offical framework for extension education, although seats were reserved for NGOs on the National Literacy Committee. NGOs take on various forms according to the political system of a country. In socialist countries, it is the political party, and its off-shoots, which is the principal NGO and which will become heavily involved in the literacy programme. In countries such as Botswana the main NGOs are social and religious, including such international organisations as YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. In Botswana it is these, together with an independent Council of Women, the Botswana Red Cross Society, and church affiliated groups which make up the group of NGOs. Since there is no active adult education association, these NGOs tend to act individually rather than as a concerted whole. This greatly reduces their potential contribution to all aspects of social and educational work.

Why is it so worth bothering with NGOs? First because if the aim is to promote a literate society, every channel of activity has to be exploited to the full. But there is a more cogent reason. NGOs exist because there are men and women in the community who see needs and are willing to work towards meeting them. They are committed people, committed to a specific cause but also committed to the betterment of society as a whole. People willing to work, usually for little material reward. Timberlake has summed up well their raison d'etre. "It is not so much because of their humanitarianism that they succeed, but their humanitarianism guides them into certain methods of operation which happen to be the most effective ways of motivating people and spreading new ideas"[2].

Extension education, in all its forms, has to rely on government staff. Agricultural demonstrators, health workers and literacy supervisors are essential. It is difficult to visualise those kinds of non-formal education existing without these cadres of full-time professional workers. Their impact would be enormously increased if they worked in partnership with NGOs, enabling them to make their contribution at every stage of an enterprise. And when it comes to grass-roots activities in communities, NGOs should be given the resources to take over much of the tasks done by the civil servants. This is likely to result in better, more committed work; it also has the advantage of being less expensive.

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[1] In contrast, the planners of the Ghanaian National Literacy Drive state that 'adult education is a voluntary activity and the Literacy Drive would best be carried out in a spirit of voluntaryism and through voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations will be ideal institutions for the Drive for a variety of reasons. They are Socialising agencies and play a key role in moulding the individual's personality...' (Policy Document on a National Literacy Drive, Ghana National Council for Adult Education, Accra, 1986, p.4). In Bangladesh, 'NGOs and other voluntary organisations will be given the responsibility of implementing the literacy programme, if suitable proposals are submitted by them...' (A Country paper on education and training of adults in Bangladesh by S. M. Matiur Rahman, Ministry of Education, 1987, p.12).

[2] Timberlake L. "Africa in Crisis". London, Earthscan, International Institute for Environment and Development, 1985.

Culture

It is not unknown for culture to fall within the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and it may then be re-allocated to non-formal or adult education. In India there is the Ministry of Education and Culture; in Thailand, the Ministry of Education is responsible for museums and reading rooms, and both come under the Department of Non-Formal Education. In Botswana, cultural activities fall within the rubric for the Ministry of Home Affairs. This encompasses museums, libraries and also supprt for NGOs. It is not surprising, therefore, that DNFE had little contact officially with the cultural life of the country. It supported the initial formation of a Council for Cultural Development, and had close contact with one private museum in Mochudi, renting rooms there for its District Office. Unofficial contact was made early on with the small but growing Library Service, and the Broadsheet was placed on library reception desks for free distribution.

It was much later that DNFE made somewhat firmer contact with the Library Service, through the establishment of local reading rooms. This is an important step forward, since both the libraries and DNFE stand to gain by pooling their resources and using the same delivery network. Book boxes can then be jointly distributed to primary schools, thereby greatly facilitating the supply of reading material in the rural areas.

There is a strong case for departments of NFE to be more than just collaborators with the Library Service. They should be represented on library boards so that the needs of less accomplished readers are constantly being considered. A literacy programme and its follow-up should be planned jointly with the Library Service. In Botswana, that Service had a seat on the NLC from its inception.

The use of songs, mime and dance featured often in Botswana literacy groups, and especially at monthly get-togethers. The use of these art forms has a twofold beneficial effect. It reinforces lessons being learned and it adds liveliness and joy to the learning experience. Literacy groups should not concentrate only on economic and social problems but be concerned with the whole of life. This includes those cultural relaxations which give colour to what otherwise may be a drab and hard existance. If learning can be made pleasurable, half the battle of sustaining motivation is won.

Distance Learning in the Third World

Distance learning appears to have been exported wholesale from the industrialised countries to the Third World with only minor cosmetic adaptations for differences in culture and environment. What has been accepted, though not without qualification, as being good for the one must surely be of benefit to the other. Furthermore, distance learning techniques are hailed as the panacea to overcome chronic Third World educational problems; swelling populations, spiralling debts and inflation and dire shortage of trained teachers combine to make the provision of formal schooling increasingly difficult. If conventional in-school methods are failing then out-of-school approaches must be adopted. Distance learning will help to solve the dilemma. Thus it is that a system which is generally regarded as being no more than a poor second best in the exporting countries is being clutched upon in the Third World with seemingly far too little thought about its weaknesses. This is not to write off distance learning. It clearly will make an important contribution to educational provision everywhere. Rather it is a plea that much more thought should go into its introduction in Third World countries.

The learning environment

First let us consider the environment in which distance learning techniques are being employed. Whilst each country has a different set of conditions those found most commonly are as follows. Rural populations tend to be scattered and the communications infrastructure to be sketchy. Climate in the form of violent storms and excessive heat can add to the isolation of many. Postal services seldom encompass all communities and in many countries the nearest post office for transmitting and receiving mail can be a great distance away. These factors seem to suggest that to rely too heavily on correspondence is unwise. Letters can take weeks or months to arrive. A person can be living over 100 kilometres from a postal depot, and even where the postman calls, visits can be very infrequent and seriously dislocated when the post lorry breaks down. Nothing is more discouraging for a student than to have to wait many weeks for the return of marked exercises. In some subjects, advance to a new section of work is unwise until the previous material has been reviewed. For distance learning to be effective under such conditions the emphasis should not be on the correspondence element.

Whether the student is a rural dweller or lives in a slum area of a sprawling city, home conditions are likely to be unsuitable for disciplined study. Houses are generally small, overcrowded, noisy and with inadequate lighting for anything other than daytime study. In many societies furniture suitable for writing will be lacking. Heat, dust and moisture will make it difficult to keep books and papers in usable condition. This description is no exaggeration; it is the norm for a large slice of the world's population. And these desperate circumstances are further adversely compounded by the intellectual poverty of the envrionment. Not only is it unlikely that the student will have a relative or friend nearby who can assist and encourage but it is improbable that there will be any nearby source from which assistance can be obtained. A secondary school may be in the vicinity, but this does not mean that either the human or material resources of the place will be made available. And in most countries a library is a rare phenomina! Again it seems that these factors all point to making individual study by correspondence notes a secondary line of approach. Somehow distance learning has to be made more personal.

The lone learner

When the students themselves are considered further problems come to light. Much distance learning is conducted at the immediate post primary level. What is the likely intellectual standing of the aspiring entrant to a course? Probably a primary education in which knowledge has been poured into the student with little emphasis on individual deduction. Rote learning will have been the order of the day. The brightest students will go on in formal schooling; it is the rejects who have recourse to other means of continuing their education. In essence, those least able to cope with studying alone will be the ones who register for distance learning courses. On leaving school the student will have no more than a poor command of language. Quite abruptly, the whole scenario changes. The safety buttresses which the school constructs are no longer there; there is no teacher who will provide the answers; no classmates to help elucidate problems. Quite suddenly the youngster is faced with a mass of complicated papers, often written not in the mother tongue but in an international language only partially comprehended. It is amazing how many of those who register for a course actually struggle through the first lessons. Their determination deserves high praise! And so once again, the inference must surely be that the correspondence notes should not be the most significant element in a course at this level. Higher up the educational ladder in post secondary work it would be acceptable. But for those who are seeking to make good their lack of secondary, or even primary, education, the written notes must be auxiliary to personal tuition, directly by a tutor and/or through radio or television.

The need for group work

The plain fact is that the system of correspondence education which is commonly adopted simply does not meet the circumstances to be found in most Third World countries. In industrialised countries, with a literate society supported by a well developed infrastructure, it may be satisfactory to devise a course of study for the lone learner. But in the Third World an wholly different approach has to be sought. The sacred cow of correspondence teaching, free pacing, must give way to a system which enables group work to be the central method. This means that registration would have to be restricted to certain times. At registration a learner is assigned to a place of study and thereafter every effort is made to keep the group together, as in a school class. Radio can then be used as a teaching medium rather than as an embellishment and the correspondence notes will augment what has been done in the group.

Critics will be quick to point out that adopting these procedures could mean that many would-be students will be unable to register. Those living in remote areas cannot be assigned to groups and for them the written notes would have to continue to be the main means of learning. A response to that is that it is better to be honest and disallow students who are almost certainly destined to become frustrated and finally join the ever growing army of drop-outs. To take money off people who can little benefit from the service is tantamount to robbery

It is a paradox that a learning method which is mainly directed to learners studying by themselves is, infact, the least learner-centred of all educational processes. The correspondence notes are mass produced (proponents of distance learning readily point to the saving which can be effected by large scale operations) and are seldom adapted to the particular needs of small communities. Environmental and cultural peculiarities cannot be incorporated in notes for, say, history, geography, science. The language used is often not of the hearth. Unless great care is taken, texts can be stilted and unclear. And there is seldom sufficient personal contact between student and tutor. Distance learning is the most demanding mode of instruction for the recipient since it relies on individual endeavour with the minimum of external support. It is a lonely experience and relatively few people are able to embark upon it with success.

Every endeavour has to be made to make distance learning as personal as possible. Apart from frequent, at least weekly, tuition sessions, there is much to be said for encouraging recruitment amongst people who can readily study together in groups. Police, soldiers, industrial workers, nurses, prisoners, can often meet at their place of work or residence. After the formal sessions they can continue to support each other through their ease of contact, one with another. In this way what was a problem for one can be solved by a friend who found that point not to be so perplexing.

In the Third World there are two groups of potential learners who have been discarded by the authorites in formal education. The first are those who leave Primary School or Junior Secondary School and for whom there are no places higher up the school ladder. The majority of these young people are unemployed and very many of them are attracted into the towns and cities, there, so often, to become a festering social problem. For countries with a distance learning unit there is a potential remedy. These young people could be enrolled in voluntary community youth groups, spending part of their time studying in classrooms when the formal pupils are not there, and part of the time on useful local community projects. Once a person has obtained employment they could leave the youth group though hopefully continue with the distance learning component. In this way thousands upon thousands of youngsters could be salvaged from a life of petty crime. But, of course, a proposal of this kind depends on those in formal education being willing to have a care for out-of-school boys and girls; a care more absent than present.

The second group to be found throughout the Third World in need of help are girls who become pregnant when at school. The rules adopted in so many countries are draconian in the extreme. The girls are banished like lepers (seldom is anything done against the offending male), and in the majority of cases their careers are totally wrecked. Heads of schools and senior educational administrators who might be expected to show some compassion adopt a holier-than-thou attitude. And yet again, in those countries which have a distance learning unit there is a humanitarian approach to the problem readily available. Heads of Schools should be instructed, first to keep the girl at school as long as possible (5th, 6th month?), and thereafter to register her for appropriate correspondence courses until she be automatically readmitted to school. But again, as with the unemployed school leaver, it requires those responsible for formal education to be pupil-centred, a hope so often not fulfilled.

One final point about distance learning. A commercial correspondence school will enrol as many students as possible. Each registered student increases the profits to be made. Government sponsored correspondence units ought to have a wholly different orientation. The learner rather than profit must be central. This suggests that there should be a ceiling number to the students to be registered, according to the size and capabilities of the unit. To exceed this number will mean that the interests of the students are being disregarded. Nobody suggests that a secondary school should expand beyond the ability of the teaching staff to provide a proper service to the pupils. Precisely the same restrictions should apply to the unit providing distance learning facilities.

Higher courses in distance learning

These comments have focussed on distance learning at the secondary level. In many countries these are the most numerous and most in need of attention. Higher up the academic ladder, the difficulties here described tend mostly to fall away. Students studying for diplomas and degrees can better cope with the correspondence notes, though even at that level, some direct tuition augmented by programmes on radio and television are desirable, as has been found in those countries establishing 'open' universities. Indeed, at all levels, courses which rely solely on the written lesson have been found to be less than satisfactory.

Conclusion

A department of non-formal education is a complex operation. The tasks falling to it are manifold; indeed, if one stopped to consider all the potentially important operations in which NFE could be involved the list[1] would be limitless. Many of these – indeed the great majority – do not come within the purview of a Ministry for Education. Nevertheless, even limited to what might reasonably be regarded as tasks for 'education' the canvas is still very broad. And there is a danger, therefore, that a department of NFE might find itself doing a multitude of micro operations and failing to discern that overall it also has macro responsibilities. This is not a plea to stifle local and community initiatives. Far from it. In general there is agreement that 'the assumptions connected with centralised planning approaches in formal education ... have little validity given the hetrogeneous nature of non-formal education structures, content and objectives'[2]. Programmes must reflect the real needs of the learners, and this suggests that nationally planned operations must contain within them sufficient flexibility to be amenable to adaptation. DNFE sought to do this by working through District Extension Teams. Nevertheless, with resources being limited there is also the necessity of determining priorities; and it is at this juncture that national priorities have to be considered along with particular local requirements. Unless a department of NFE pays due regard to what are stated as being national priorities, it is unlikely to attract the resources it needs. Governments certainly will not divert human and material resources to operations regarded as being of low priority, and external donors invariably take their cue from governments.

For DNFE the priority national task was clear; it was to make its contribution towards the creation of a literate society. This was also the view of its parent Ministry and of government. But within this overall national commitment was built in the requirement that as far as possible the strategy should be District orientated. Indeed, District Officers were specifically required to co-operate with District Extension Teams in pursuing such other locally initiated projects as was possible. In this way a balance was struck between central priorities and locally discerned needs. Inevitably this does create a tension; there are pressures to give undue weight to one at the expense of the other; it is a balance which all working in NFE are aware of.

A Personal Postscript

It is now almost thirty years since I started working in the Third World, for the great majority of that time stationed in Africa or Asia or at the headquarters of UNESCO. I recall that milestone in 1961 when the Ministers of Education in Africa met at Addis Ababa; in 1983 a very different constituency gathered in Harare for a similar meeting. In little over twenty years the continent had changed from colonial dependencies to sovereign independent States, with only the southern tip remaining to be freed from minority government.

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[1] See Pia Kyaer-Olsen, 'Non-Formal education; its vital role in development in Botswana' (in Townsend Coles, Maverick of the Education Family; Pergamon, Oxford, 1982) for a detailed account of the various non-formal education activities undertaken by Government Ministries.

[2] Gorham, A., 'non-formal training programmes for rural skill development', Stockholm, SIDA, no date, p.23.

Thirty years ago there was a sense of optimism in Africa which increased as year by year countries took command of their own destinies. There was a conviction that amidst all the changes taking place, the most potent would be education. That newly fashioned systems of education would give the continent the dynamism to go forward to a period of growing prosperity for all. This was the hope. But thirty years on and the image has become blurred. There are examples where progressive strides have been made; overall there is a realisation that goals are not being achieved, that still there are countless thousands of children never entering school, and still more receiving such a superficial dusting of learning that it is soon lost and forgotten. Indeed, when the situation was reviewed in Harare in 1983, despite glowing words by many delegates describing the situation in their own countries, the overall picture was one of disappointment. Thus it was necessary to sound a challenge. 'Africa ... must increase the need to innovate audaciously in order to create new ways and identify original solutions'[1].

So what had gone wrong? Why has the optimism of the 60's evaporated, substituted by more sober expectations? Why is it that education has not delivered the goods? For certainly there is general dissatisfaction with formal systems of education, and non-formal has not been given a chance of developing its full potential.

There are, of course, a constellation of reasons, many in no way connected with education. Economic recession, continuing drought, savage wars, the population explosion, and oh yes, still rearing its image, colonialism. Since the majoirty of countries in Africa (the anti-colonial cry is barely heard elsewhere) have been independent for twenty or more years, they have had ample time to re-shape their systems of education, had they the will or desire to do so. The fact is that the majority of senior educational administrators today received their education during the colonial period, and appear to have done remarkably little study of their profession ever since. For them the known of the past is preferable to an unknown future with all its attendant discomfortures.

And this mood of pessimism comes at a time when Third World countries are literally being bombarded by well-intentioned donors offering scholarships, conferences, seminars, study courses in abundance. There has never been an era like it. That so many of these events are barely worth consideration is beyond the point. Invitations to travel the world are eagerly clutched;

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[1] 'African Development strategies and their implications for education'. Paris, UNESCO 1982, p.17.

remarkably little feed back materialises. Indeed, the number of really helpful report-back accounts available is but a small percentage of the number of events patronised. Here the initiators must bear much of the blame, some countries spawning conferences with remarkable fecundity. Chief offender is UNESCO, whose biannual General Conference lasts six weeks. Much of the time is spent either listening to prepared speeches, which could be better circulated as documents, or debating the virtually unalterable secrtariat-composed programme. The conference demands attendance by many senior officials. UNICEF is not far behind with what appears to be unlimited funds for conference going. In contrast, Commonwealth meetings are commendably short and businesslike. There are also many national donors who seem unaware of the disruption to work caused by syphoning off senior staff to attend meetings. And not only are there a bewildering number of invitations for such occasions, but there is also an army of 'experts', ready to do their two to three year stints, unburdening themselves of their pet theories of education. Perhaps one should say that despite all these meetings and purveyors of expert advice, it is noteworthy that some advance has actually been made in education, though much less than was anticipated.

What, then, are the causes of education's poor showing? There are, no doubt, many reasons. Not all are attributable to every country, for each situation is sui generis. What has been an obstacle in one will not occur in another. But a common one is the failure of top management to manage. Education is usually the biggest employer, spending in most Third World countries over 20% of the national recurrent budget. It is a major industry, often in the hands of managers who are weak on their professional subject and weaker still in management skills. Instead of clear, decisive leadership, there is excessive evasion of decision making. And even when decisions are taken, there is little perseverance to ensure that those decisions are actually carried through. The civil service mentality, that debilitating disease, attacks all; it seems to affect the upper eschelons of authority more than the lower orders. Note has already been taken of the plethora of conferences, etc. on offer. Such excursions are more often for the top managers who can be expected to be away from their duties for a fifth of the year. No private enterprise could exist with such absenteeism. If State education systems are to fulfil their responsibilities adequately, a first priority is to equip them with leaders who have the courage and determination to lead. Perhaps some donors could put this on their priority list, with the caveat that having provided training, the returning person should be appropriately posted to apply the newly learned skills, and monitored in so doing.

But what ought to be the organisational structure of Ministries of Education? Clearly there can be no one blue print since each country presents a unique set of circumstances. However, one consideration over-rides all others. It is that management of education, whether formal or non-formal, should be brought as close to the consumers as possible. This precept has been accepted in non-formal education; formal education, in most countries, has only just begun the essential process of decentralisation out of the capital. Ministries of Education continue to be clogged with trivial paper work. Managers instead of managing are spending valuable time each day reading matter which is dealing with the most minor of issues. No captain of industry would waste time on such pursuits. Yet highly paid officials in a nation's biggest concern feel obliged to do so. Such practices must stop if education is ever to be put on a firm administrative basis.

It is noteworthy how few senior educational administrators actually keep themselves abreast with developments taking place in their profession. Of the many Ministries of Education in which I have worked, I cannot recall one where a professional journal is regularly purchased and circulated. Not one! Consider the disasterous effects if surgeons and physicians failed to maintain their professional competence. Or civil engineers who, through lack of interest, were unaware of new materials and methods of construction. Such ignorance would be regarded as unacceptable. Unfortunately in education there appears to be no such requirement that officials, at all levels, should maintain their state of competence. What was learned many years previously in teacher training college continues to be faithfully regurgitated. Again, in my experience I have heard of no rigorous and disciplined seminars being offered for those responsible for the management of education services and yet if Third World University faculties of education were really alert to their priority tasks, the provision of such facilities would surely be high on the list. It is doubtful whether more than a small percentage of the published outpourings on education of UNESCO are actually read, indeed the lack of intellectual vigour in Ministries of Education generally can only mean that the profession is being led largely by the moribund and blinkered. Donors to education could well substitute short term refresher courses for senior officals for the multitude of undemanding study visits currently on offer.

Of course curricula need adjustment. This will always be the case. As knowledge deepens and the political and social order changes, so too must the content of what is being taught. For nothing can enjoy the luxury of being static. In particular, at the secondary level the curricular must reflect the needs of the whole nation and not, as may be the case, those of the sophisticated urban dweller.

But in my experience it is generally not the curricula which are the principal cause of low standards. It is rather the poor quality of teaching coupled with over-size classes inadequately supplied with books and other learning material. And much of this points again to the incompetent management of education, for getting supplies to schools is a task of management. One has to remember that the majority of teachers are in the classroom because they could not find employment elsewhere. Primary teachers are those who were rejected for formal senior secondary education. Secondary teachers are those who chose education as the softest option open to them. And since the more senior ranks in education are generally those who commenced as teachers (and one has no quarrel with that) it is not hard to discern why education is an inferior profession. Fortunately these are generalisations which are true only so long as the exceptions are remembered. In each country and in every generation there have been outstanding women and men in education, people of vision who have truly put the interests of pupils and students before administrative convenience. For as has been remarked previously, when discussing non-formal education, the profession as a whole can only effectively carry out its responsibilities when it is in the hands of committed people.

One final point which is more applicable to Africa than elsewhere. My experience is with Anglophone countries; it may also be true of others. The countries of Africa are desperately short of teachers in secondary education. As a consequence teachers are recruited from all over the world. All have to indicate that they have a working knowledge of English. This does not mean, however, that they are fluent in the language, and it clearly does not mean that they all speak, write and read the language in the same manner. Since communication in English is central to all learning at the secondary level of education, it follows that the linguistic Tower of Babel which the pupils have to endure must have detrimental effects upon them. And yet the managers of education appear to be oblivious of this. A visit to any Anglophone country in Africa will quickly demonstrate what is happening. Speak to most pupils in the middle form of secondary education and they can barely comprehend a sentence in simple English. Something clearly is wrong. This is not a plea to restrict the teaching of English to those whose mother tongue it is. That would be ridiculous. It is, however, suggested that before a non-English speaking person is appointed to a school in any subject, a rigorous oral English test should be taken.

Let the People Learn

It has been argued in this book that non-formal education has its distinctive features which must be respected if it is to make its fullest contribution to individual and national development. At the same time it has also been argued that a close organic relationship should be fostered between formal and non-formal education. Placing undue stress on the distinctions between the two sectors is being counter productive. There are important differences: androgogy and pedagogy are different disciplines, but they also share much in common. If education as a whole is to go forward to make its proper contribution to individual fulfilment and national development, points of contact between the two complementary systems much be nurtured in every way possible. In this way alone can the best use be made of the human and material resources available. School premises should be open to all. The suggestion that adults don't like entering school buildings has not been borne out in my experience. There may be some slight initial reluctance, but given understanding leadership, hesitations can be readily dissipated. The main problem is the size of the furniture! Many of the subjects taught in formal curricula could be better handled through non-formal approaches. This is the case with most if not all the applied subjects as well as aspects of social studies, moral education and sport. Teachers should be so trained that they can perform in both sectors. In these various ways each sector will reinforce and support the other.

But education is not just a matter of mechanics and setting up suitable structures. The best plans will fail if those responsible for it in whatever capacity are not wholly committed to the service. Ministries of Education can be effective only where those involved, administrators and teachers, are genuine in their endeavours. It still remains an open question whether providing education through civil service procedures can so enliven people to give that element of commitment which transforms a task from being one to be completed as quickly as possible to being a challenge to be accomplished only when the needs of the recipient have been met. Perhaps this points to the necessity of having a lively and dedicated Union for those working in education; an independent body not solely concerned with material gain but also with the maintenance of professional standards. One thing seems certain. If education is to be the spearhead for the much needed renaissance in all countries, there has to be a radical change of heart in many of those involved. And above all there must be in all sectors of education a re-affirmation of the desire to let the people learn.

A story told by Roby Kidd, the former eminent Canadian educationist, makes a fitting end to this narrative. There was a young child who habitually came to school unkempt and unwashed. One day his teacher decided to take action and wrote a note to the child's mother, drawing attention to the undesirable state of the young person. Next day the response came back by another note. 'I know Jamey aint no bed of roses; don't smell him, learn him'. That mother had her priorities right[1].

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[1] From Kidd 'How adults learn' (Association Press, New York).

Appendix I

ESTIMATED RECURRENT AND DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE. 1981/82.

All figures in Pula (18)

Recurrent Estimates					%
Personal emoluments					
Salaries and Allowances	255,160				
Industrial Class Wages	49,340				
Casual Labour	3,560				
Temporary assistance	31,600	(1)			
			339,660		71
Internal travelling and subsistence			12,600	(2)	2.5
External travelling and subsistence			12,260	(3)	2.5
General expenses and supplies (4)					
Advertising and Publicity	200	(5)			
Domestic and Household requisites	1,200				
Incidentals	400				
Office supplies	200				
Postal charges	2,100	(6)			
Service charges (water, electricity)	3,000				
Uniforms and protective clothing	1,180				
			8,280		1.5
Maintenance and Running Expenses					
Fire fighting equipment	50				
Office equipment (7)	50				
Recording and Visual Aid equipment	300				
Static Plant (8)	2,500				
Grounds	400				
			3,320		.5
Training (9)					
Courses (10)	3,200				
Materials (11)	57,000				
Tutors Fees (12)	32,000				
			92,200		19
Councils, Conferences, Exhibitions (13)			500		
Grants to Organisations			100		
Special expenditure (14)					
Audio-visual Aids	550				
Furniture and Equipment	6,700				
Recording and Broadcasting equipment	2,000				
			9,320		2
	Total Recurrent		*478,240*		

Development Estimates	
National Literacy Programme (15)	1,044,000
Headquarters Building (16)	65,000
Education Centres (16)	88,000
Educational Broadcasting (16)	20,000
Matsha NFE Residential Centre (17)	(2,310,000)

Source: Government of Botswana; estimates of expenditure, 1981/82.

Figures in brackets refer to Notes on pp.124 and 126.

Notes to Appendix 1

1. Temporary Assistance. For professional and clerical help required on a part-time or short duration basis.

2. For internal transportation. Government vehicles are used whenever possible and for which there is no charge for petrol and maintenance. This vote covers journeys by authorised private vehicles and for subsistence.

3. This vote covers the cost of participation at conferences, seminars, etc. outside Botswana.

4. Most general supplies come from the Government Central Supplies Department.

5. Mainly newspaper advertising. Radio slots are broadcast without charge.

6. Internal correspondence is carried without charge. This vote therefore covers external correspondence, telephones and telegrams.

7. Small items not available from Government Central Supplies.

8. The maintenance of unusual plant which is not serviced by Government. In the case of the Department, this vote covered maintenance of the printing and collating equipment.

9. Programme activities incurred in the National Literacy Programme came out of Development Funds (see Note 15 below).

10. This vote covered meetings for tutors of correspondence courses and training sessions in home economics.

11. Mainly paper and other printing materials. Most of this vote went on correspondence course material.

12. For the tutors marking the correspondence course scripts who were paid by the script.

13. Mainly for costs incurred in mounting displays at the Gaborone and District Agricultural Shows.

14. For equipment not supplied from Government Central Supplies. Items had to be specified before they could be included in the estimates.

15. This is the annual vote for all expenses to be incurred in the National Literacy Programme. The figure would be broken down into its various components for staff salaries and honoraria to part-time Group Leaders, for training, for materials, and for capital costs (vehicles, etc.). The break down of the literacy budget is described in chapter 2.

16. These figures indicate the amount allocated during 1981/82 on capital developments. In the cases of Education Centres and Educational Broadcasting, these are projects shared with other Departments of the Ministry of Education.

17. The figure is the total estimated expenditure on the whole Matsha complex of which the NFE Centre is only a part. Recurrent expenses for the Centre would only commence in the 1982/83 financial year.

18. 2.5 Pula equals £1 approximately. During 1981 when these estimates were being prepared 1.6 Pula equalled £1 sterling.

Appendix 2

THE TEACHING METHOD: TRAINING NOTES

General points

1. Remember that literacy participants can speak and understand Setswana as well as you can. They now wish to learn the skills of reading and writing the language.
2. This paper outlines a basic pattern for the conduct of a lesson. Later it will be possible to show LGLs how to diversify sessions, and to use the Broadsheet and other supplementary material.
3. Every Fifth lesson in the primer is a revision lesson. The other lessons in the primer may take one, two or possibly three sessions (each of 1¼ hours). Do not hurry through a lesson; the important thing is that participants are learning and understanding the material.
4. It is important that letters and numbers are written in the same form as is used in primary schools.
5. Encourage LGLs to make sessions interesting, and tell them not to scold individuals. Praise and encourage.
6. Remember only Setswana to be spoken!

The basic pattern

Stage 1. Talk about the key word and picture. Encourage the participants to talk about the picture. (5 to 10 minutes, according to the interest being shown).

Stage 2. Picking up the sound of the word in sentences.
Three sentences, each containing the key word. Which is the common word?
Do this with several participants.

Stage 3. From hearing the word to seeing it.
Seeing the word as a whole.
Breaking up the word into syllables. Explain what syllables are.
Bringing the word together again.
This is done on the flannelgraph first (several times) and then in the primer.

Stage 4. Playing with syllables and words.
- on the flannelgraph.
- in the primer.
- with the syllable and word cards.

revising syllables from previous lessons.
encouraging participants to try making words.

Numeracy
Lessons have number headings.
Explain how to make the lesson number.
Help participants to do the arithmetic sums. Ensure participants understand + – =.

Writing
(How to write, how to hold a pencil, etc. has already been explained).
At every writing session, the LGL must stand behind each participant, check that the pencil is being correctly held, assist with writing. Encourage and praise.

Final five minutes
Go back to the initial word and syllable games.
Make sure everyone knows when the next session is to be held.
Check that the attendance register has been completed. Ask participants to check on friends who are absent.

Source: Notes made by the Chief Education Officer for a talk in 1980.

LIST OF LITERACY MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN 1981

Primer 1
Primer 2
Primer 3
Primer 4
Primer 5
Leaders guide I Setswana
Leaders Guide I English
Leaders Guide II Setswana
Leaders Guide II English
Flashcards for Flannelgraph, in sheets:-
  Lessons 1-3
  Lessons 4-7
  Lessons 8-10
  Lessons 11, 12
  Lessons 13-17
  Lessons 18, 19
  Lessons 20, 21
  Blank small
  Blank large
Supplementary Readers
  "Selemo, Mariga"
  "Legodu"
  "Rra Morumo"
  "Letlhela – lefoko"
  "Ba dira eng?"
  "Go sela dipara"
  "Go pagama lere"
  "Dinotshe"
  "Fa nokeng"
  "Mmemogolo"
  "Di jela bana"
  "Itse majang a gago"
  "Mpepu"
One-to-one packs
Literacy poster blank
Literacy group register

Group Report Form
LAs weekly report
Location of groups
DAEO's monthly report
Exercise books
Leaders' boxes
Pencils
Felt-tip pens
Large C4 envelopes
Rubber bands
Sand paper
Glue
Scissors
Rubbers
Two-sheet boards
Rucksacks
Armbands LA
Armbands LGL
LA 'passport'
Lamps
Metal trunks
Broadsheet monthly

These items were listed in a despatch request form held in District Offices.

EPILOGUE

Since writing this narrative, the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Botswana has undertaken an evaluation of the NLP. The following is a summary of Recommendations which are contained in the report for future development.

(paragraph numbers are as in the evaluation report).

6.2.1. 'It is recommended that the Ministry of Education reaches an agreement with the Central Statistics Office to carry out a nationwide sample survey that would provide information about literacy related to the demographic characteristics of the population...' 'It is recommended that the management information system in DNFE is revised with a view to providing more sophisticated statistical information. The new system will require greater capacity at headquarters and training for field officers in its operation'.

6.2.2. 'The evaluation exercise included a literacy and numeracy test for a national sample of learners in the NLP. The test revealed a high level of performance by learners, 81% of whom got an average score of 40% or more, which can be equated by passing the Standard Four attainment test. The analysis of test results considered performance in relation to variables such as location, age-group, educational exposure, sex and so forth, ... It was concluded that NLP was successful in teaching those who stay in the programme how to read, write and count. But certain questions remain unanswered. Such as how long it takes a Learner to master reading and writing .... It is recommended that DNFE conducts more regular testing and collects more complex data so that a better picture of learner performance can be obtained.'

6.2.3. ... 'It is recommended that the DNFE carries out a curriculum evaluation and development exercise to reinvigorate the NLP' ....

6.3.1. 'The evaluation suggests that although the importance of the post-literacy stage has been recognised from the beginning of the NLP, in practice not enough has been done to develop post-literacy activities ....'

6.3.2. The first element of the post-literacy stage includes the production and distribution of useable and relevant reading materials in Setswana on a large scale, to create a 'literate environment' especially in the rural areas. It is recommended that the village reading room pilot project in Kgatleng District is monitored with a view to making proposals for rural information centres throughout the nation which can be the key points in material distribution. In order to produce appropriate materials, it is recommended that a Materials Development sub-committee of the NLC be immediately established .. also that consideration be given to the development of a rural newspaper.

6.3.3. ... DNFE should facilitate a process whereby already mobilised and cohesive groups of literacy graduates provide a context in which further learning can take place provided by other extension departments. In order to implement this policy, it is recommended that stronger co-operation is achieved with other relevant departments both at national level and at district level. It is recommended that DNFE staff are given in-service training to develop the requisite knowledge and skills to encourage the formation of income-generating project groups and that a Projects Officer is appointed at Headquarters ..... It is recommended that such project groups are fully integrated into existing extension services ....'

6.3.4 ... 'improve the linkages to the primary schools so that young people of school going age who graduate from the NLP can move easily into formal education' ...

6.3.5. ... 'to develop a formal programme leading to the adult equivalent of the PSLE ..... It is therfore recommended that the demand for English be met in the context of providing a parallel adult course to the PSLE ....'

6.3.6. The evaluation believes that this policy (i.e. 6.3.1. to 6.3.5.) provides a comprehensive programme ... of adult basic education ....'

6.4.1. ... 'It is recommended that the NLC be made more effective and more closely tied to the RECC and the Rural Development Council. At the district and village level, DNFE staff should be are involved in DETs and VETs'.

6.4.2. ... 'It is recommended that the financial plan is developed which specifies the cost of implementing the new (proposals)'.

6.4.3. 'In order for DNFE to offer a coherant range of learning opportunities to adults at different levels, a new organisational structure is required. It is recommended that this structure should clarify relationships between specialist sections at Headquarters and field staff ..... It is recommended that the question of supervision in particular is addressed at every level ....'

6.4.4. '... It is recommended that a clear manpower plan is developed for the department....'

6.5.1. '... It is recommended that DNFE appoints a Research and Evaluation Officer at Headquarters. The role of this officer would include, a) responsibility for the Management Information System and the production of statistics, b) undertaking research and evaluation activities, c) promoting research and evaluation by other DNFE staff and d) commissioning special tasks undertaken by outside researchers ...'

6.6.1. The Evaluation Team concludes that the NLP needs to regain mementum in the context of a policy which defines more clearly the DNFEs role in the education of the nations adults ....'

Condensed from 'An evaluation of the Botswana National Literacy Programme', Institute of Adult Education, University of Botswana, 1987, pp.114-118.

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Edwin Townsend-Coles has worked in NFE all his career, from being a Regimental Education Officer in Burma at the end of the Second World War, through being Education Secretary of the National Council of YMCAs to a Specialist in NFE for UNESCO and the World Bank, his last duty station being Botswana. Two major works of his, published by Pergamon, Oxford, are "Adult Education in Developing Countries", 2nd edition, and "Maverick of the Education Family".

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